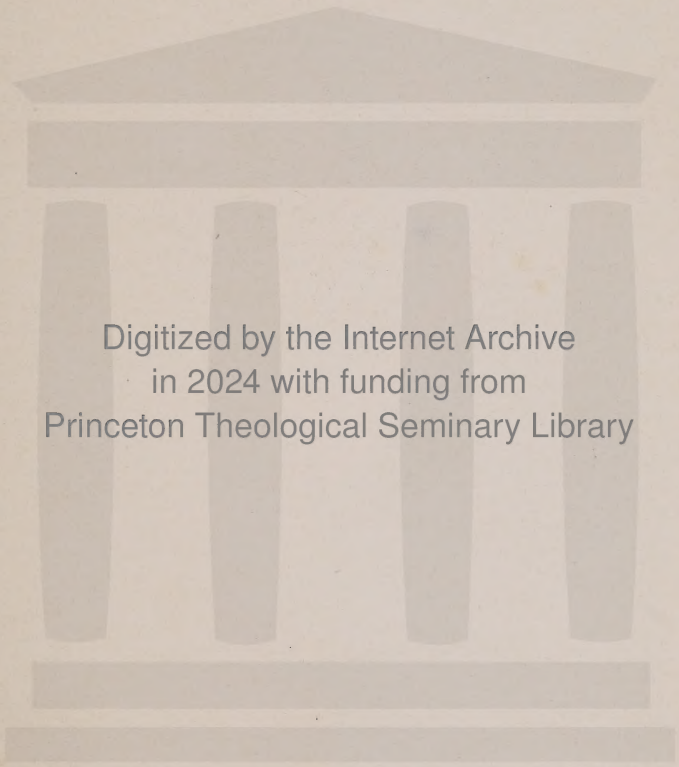
AGAINST THE TIDE

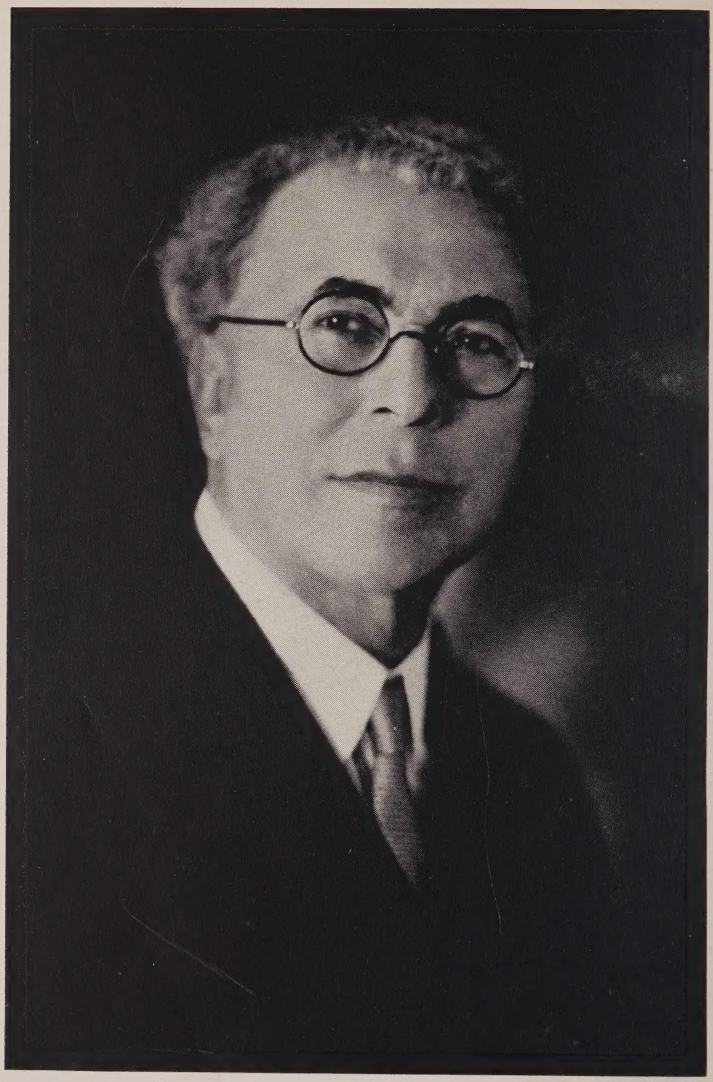
POWELL

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
NOV 23 2009
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

BX6455.P63 A3 1938
Powell, A. Clayton (Adam
Clayton), 1865-1953.
Against the tide : an
autobiography /


Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024 with funding from
Princeton Theological Seminary Library

https://archive.org/details/againsttideautob00powe



AGAINST THE TIDE

An Autobiography

BY

A. CLAYTON POWELL, Sr.

PASTOR-EMERITUS, ABYSSINIAN BAPTIST CHURCH

NEW YORK



RICHARD R. SMITH

NEW YORK 1938

COPYRIGHT, 1938, BY RICHARD R. SMITH
120 EAST 39TH STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission of the publisher

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY J. J. LITTLE AND IVES COMPANY, NEW YORK

This book is affectionately dedicated
to the many thousands
who helped me through the years

INTRODUCTION

The Rev. A. Clayton Powell, Sr., upon the completion of his twenty-ninth year as pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church, New York City, decided that the clock had struck the hour for his retirement from active service in the pastorate and forthwith proceeded to tender his resignation to the officers and members of this great church. On two former occasions he had attempted to relinquish this important pastorate, but his loyal congregation could not bear the thought of losing his able and inspiring leadership. As a means of inducing him to reconsider the former resignations, the church offered to give him additional help so that the strain of his work might be relieved. What is a minister to do when his church consistently refuses to allow him to resign? Well, there are two alternatives—he may accede to the wishes of the church and hang on even against his better judgment, or he may definitely decide to go through with it regardless of the importunities of his followers. It is known that Dr. Powell intended giving up the pastorate of the Abyssinian Church after he had reached the biblical span of three score years and ten. This he honestly tried to do; but, as stated above, his congregation demurred. Again he attempted the same thing after he had turned seventy-

one, but with the same reaction on the part of his congregation. Finally, in his seventy-second year, he submitted what he himself called his last resignation, which was reluctantly accepted by the congregation. He was then made pastor-emeritus for life.

Dr. Powell did not resign the pastorate of the Abyssinian Church because of any signs of approaching senility. He was then and is now in vigorous health both physically and mentally. He had other good and sufficient reasons for detaching himself from active participation in the direction and management of the affairs of this great institution. Fortunately for him and for the Abyssinian Church, the matter of a successor did not present much of a problem. A. Clayton Powell, Jr., who had grown up in the church, and who had served as its assistant pastor for several years, was immediately called to the pastorate of the Abyssinian Church, thus forestalling that dreadful period of experimentation during which many good churches are almost wrecked. Young Powell is well trained and possesses a dynamic personality. He may be counted on to carry on the Powell tradition at the Abyssinian Church in a manner that will prove to be a source of great joy not alone to his parents, but to all his friends and well-wishers.

"What will Dr. Powell do, now that he is free to do nothing, if he so chooses?" was the question many of his friends began asking immediately following his retirement from active service in the pastorate. It was inconceivable that a man of his industrious habits, love of books and facility in writing should resign himself

to a life of ease and leisure. Dr. Powell himself answered this question on the night of his farewell testimonial by announcing that it was his purpose to begin work as soon as practicable on a book that would be autobiographical in character. The decision to give to the world the story of his life in book form came in answer to the solicitations of Dr. Powell's many friends. The choice of the title of the book, *Against The Tide*, is not surprising; it is almost inevitable. The author loves the sea in all its moods. To him the sea is a symbol of life, and all men are voyagers. His book presents to us the picture of a lone sailor struggling against wind and tide and trying with all his might to make the port of success. It was indeed rough voyaging in the beginning, and it was only because of the author's exceptional seamanship that his little bark was not completely submerged. Of course, with respect to the hardships encountered by the author in his efforts to reach the goal he had set for himself in life, the story told in *Against The Tide* differs little from that of most men who have achieved fame in the world. In saying this, however, we do not detract at all from its worthwhileness. Every story of genuine success is packed full of human interest, and *Against The Tide* is no exception. More, since it comes with all the exhilarating freshness of a breath of sea air, this story will provide a relish to the reader not ordinarily present in other autobiographical literature.

The author is careful to give due credit to all those great souls who encouraged and assisted him in his

battles against the strong tides of life. He remembers in gratitude his teachers who helped to mold his career, his wonderful wife, who has been a veritable Gibraltar of strength throughout the years, and all of the preachers and other workers who helped him realize his dream. He magnifies the achievements of all his predecessors at the Abyssinian Church, and realizes that without them he could not have made his great contribution to the denomination and the cause of religion. No little man could possibly rise to such heights of generosity and appreciation.

The author of *Against The Tide* has made liberal use of printers' ink during the forty-five years of his public ministry. He has published in pamphlet form several of his sermons, lectures and addresses, some of which attained wide circulation. He now sends forth a book in the hope that its message may bring renewed courage to all who are struggling against the tide.

William P. Hayes.

Bethany Baptist Church,
Newark, New Jersey.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
INTRODUCTION BY REV. W. P. HAYES, D.D.		vii
CHAPTER		
1.	THE INLET TIDE	1
2.	UNKNOWN SEAS	18
3.	THE POLESTAR	26
4.	CONTRARY WINDS	49
5.	LAUNCHING OUT INTO THE DEEP	67
6.	TIDES AND CLIMES	87
7.	THE RISING TIDE	136
8.	THE FLOOD TIDE	167
9.	TIDAL WAVES	203
10.	TRYING TO MAKE PORT	256
11.	ESTIMATIONS OF THE SAILOR	292
	EPILOGUE	322

AGAINST THE TIDE

Chapter I

THE INLET TIDE

> You must not measure a man by the heights he has reached, but by the depths from which he has come.
>
> Frederick Douglass

DO YOU know that a twenty-eight-hour train ride southward from New York on the coldest winter day will land you in June weather? I have tried this several times, staying from two to five weeks each time at West Palm Beach, Florida. I always take an overcoat but never need it.

After traveling over more than half of the world, including Bermuda, Cuba, Central America, Italy, Egypt and Palestine, I say unhesitatingly that Florida has the finest climate I have found. Even in southern California to keep comfortable and to keep from getting rheumatism, one must wear summer clothing during the middle of the day and winter clothing, including a topcoat, at night. I doff all my heavy wearing apparel when I reach Palm Beach and don it again when I start north. I have made a few brief stops at Jacksonville, Miami and smaller places, but I always spend the major portion of the time allotted me at Palm Beach,

not simply because it has the best climate but because it is the best place to see Florida in its glory. If you have ever sailed over Lake Worth or motored around its beautiful banks and did not feel very near heaven, you have not only lost your taste for the beautiful, but you have sinned away the day of grace.

Lake Worth is twenty miles long and from a half to one mile wide. On its west bank is the city of West Palm Beach, on the east bank is Palm Beach. The latter has more wealth and wealthy people than any other place in Dixie, if not in the world. It is a distinction to be a servant in a home or hotel in Palm Beach. I have no claim whatever to aristocracy, but I always feel like an aristocrat when I drive through Palm Beach. This is sufficient reason for driving through its flower- and fern-banked streets and sailing on its placid and flower-scented lake several times each week during my stay in Florida. If you want to see the trees, palms, fruits, ferns and flowers of Florida, it is not necessary to run all over the state. Simply take a sail up Lake Worth. On either of its banks you will see the royal palm in great abundance and the other thousand and one varieties of the palm family. On the banks of this lake stand every tree that can be found in Florida: the banyan, eucalyptus, cypress, Australian pine, magnolia, sapodilla, the live oak, whose limbs are covered with beautiful Spanish moss, and above all the royal poinciana, whose red flowers remind one of the fiery bush Moses saw on Horeb. Every tropical fruit abounds here; oranges, grapefruit, limes, pawpaws,

guavas, avocado pears, tangerines, mangoes, persimmons, lemons, bananas, and pineapples are among the common varieties. The coconut palm flourishes. It seems that nature tried to plant all the beautiful flowers in the world in Palm Beach. One passes through a riot of flowers of every kind and hue. Every species of roses, the sweet magnolias, azaleas, hibiscus, poinsettia, the red bignonia, the trumpet flower, the white and yellow jasmine, the golden allamanda, the many-hued oleander, the famous petunias and the gorgeous flame vine that covers walls, fences, trees and houses in lavish profusion—these are just a few of the particularly beautiful blooms. Out of this profusion of tropical trees, fruit and flowers, shyly peep white houses representing every known style of architecture. Add to this dozens of the finest and most beautiful yachts riding gracefully at anchor in Lake Worth, and you have a picture hard to equal any place in the world.

To me the climate, flowers, fruits and trees are not the chief attraction at Palm Beach, but fishing. Fishing is my hobby. I have fished the rivers and lakes of the United States and Canada, the Atlantic Ocean from Bar Harbor, Maine to Florida, Long Island Sound and Chesapeake Bay, the Gulf of Mexico at Corpus Christi, the Caribbean Sea, the Pacific Ocean around Catalina Island and other places, and the Sea of Galilee where Jesus fished, but by far the best and most thrilling fishing I have ever done was in Palm Beach. In these waters there are six hundred species of the finny tribe. If you are satisfied with catching the small varieties

such as mullet, blue runner, Spanish mackerel, sheepshead and fighting blues, you may have your fill of this sport on Lake Worth in a rowboat. I was with a party of three that boated thirty-five of these little fighters in forty-five minutes.

But if you want real sport, if you want the thrill of a lifetime, if you want to forget that you are married, get aboard one of the many fishing yachts, buck the inlet tide and go out into the Atlantic Ocean near the Gulf Stream. I say buck the tide, for to get out of Lake Worth to the waters where the big fish strike, one must go against the swiftest tide I have ever stemmed. Lake Worth is fed by an inlet about one hundred fifty feet wide at the north end of Palm Beach. The water rushing through this inlet raises and lowers Lake Worth about eight feet twice every twenty-four hours. It is swift enough under normal conditions, but dangerously swift when the tide is accompanied by a strong wind. Many a boat has been slapped to pieces by watery hands upon the rocks here. Huge billows follow each other in close succession, beating upon the rocks, reaching their aquatic fingers appealingly toward heaven. One feels that they are trying to jam and pack the whole Atlantic Ocean into Lake Worth.

Anywhere from one to three miles beyond the inlet you will encounter the swift-striking kingfish with its wonderful colors resembling mother-of-pearl shells; the olive-green dolphin from two to six feet in length, leaping high into the sunlight, making it to me the

most spectacularly beautiful fish that swims the ocean; the swift-dashing bonita and tuna that make you turn your reel until the skin leaves your hand.

The chief ambition, however, of every true disciple of Izaak Walton who goes to Palm Beach is to hang and land a sailfish. They grow as long as eight feet and are called sailfish because they have a brilliantly colored fin running down their backs about two feet high which they can raise above the water, giving the appearance of a sail. They are among the most ferocious fighters and swiftest runners in the fish family. No line can be put on a reel strong enough to hold one, and to attempt to hold one with a hand line is to get your fingers or hand cut off. My first trip out in December, 1935, I boated a seven foot four inch sail weighing forty-six pounds. He ripped off two hundred yards of line faster than Jesse Owens can sprint over a race track. After permitting him to wear himself down by racing all over the ocean, I reeled him to gaff in thirty minutes. A wealthy Palm Beach tourist remarked when I reached the dock with my prize that he had spent five hundred dollars trying to catch a sail. I rarely ever went out without hooking a sail, but never landed another until March, 1938. This second one was seven feet long. With a stronger line and better reel I had him on deck in twenty minutes.

Going out of Lake Worth against the swift inlet tide for big fish is symbolic of my whole life. I heard Dr. John Brown, pastor for sixteen years of John Bunyan's Church at Bedford, England, say in his

Lyman Beecher lectures at Yale: "Young students for the ministry, if you do not find a man or group of men in your first church who antagonize your every move, or oppose your every suggestion, get on your knees and pray for the Lord to send such opposition. This will do more than all your friends and flatterers to make you successful." I have never had to pray for opposition. It has been as regular and ofttimes as fierce as the inlet tide at Palm Beach and I have enjoyed it. I have never cared for smooth roads and placid lakes because they make small men and poor sailors. I have always removed cushions from my study chair placed there by benevolent church ladies, and only recently I have been able to sleep on a soft mattress. I hate mediocrity. Little, easy jobs make no appeal to me. My life has been devoted to carrying the heavy end of the log and to catching big fish. I have not landed all that I hung, but I think that the reader of this book will agree that I have landed at least my share.

My birth, early life and training prepared me for hardships. Twenty-five days after General Lee surrendered at Appomattox I was born near Martin's Mill at the conflux of Maggotty and Soak Creeks, Franklin County, Virginia. On my paternal side I know less than little about my ancestors. My maternal grandmother was dominated largely by Indian blood and traits. She was very fond of eating rats and wanted to be going somewhere all the time. She was a great hunter of small game and taught me the art of hunt-

ing. My mother's father was a German. I never saw him but was told he was handsome and brilliant.

My earliest recollections were of direst poverty. The wealth of the south had been destroyed by the Civil War and both poor white and poor colored suffered together. There was not a white man within twelve miles of our cabin who could pay a wage of fifty cents a day or a white woman able to pay more than twenty-five cents for a day's washing. The colored and the poor whites had neither land nor money, but they knew how to farm. The ex-slave holders had no money and no experience at farming, but plenty of land. They gave the landless of both races a place to live and land to till, on the condition that they would give one-third of their crops to the land owners. This was the beginning of the share cropper evil. It was not an evil in the beginning, but a blessed necessity. Had it not been for this arrangement, both classes would have starved to death. From 1865 to 1875, share cropping was a fine piece of co-operation that saved both races in the rural south where the majority of the people lived at that time. We have heard much about financial panics, dust and drought famines, depressions and recessions, but to the people of the south who lived through the first ten years following the Civil War, all of these hard time periods are in comparison like fat years and feast days.

This brings to mind an experience of the late Will Rogers. When the last depression was at its worst, he was traveling through the deep south investigating conditions and getting the reaction of various classes. He

found many complaints and much pessimism among the middle class and so-called well-to-do white people. He saw a colored woman, about seventy-two years old, neatly dressed and with contentment spread all over her face, sitting on the porch of her humble home. Mr. Rogers asked, "How are you today, auntie?" "I was never happier in my life," she replied. "Are you and your people affected much by the depression?" was his next question. She said, "Sir, we have been used to hard times down here all of our lives until recently. This is the first time we had enough to eat and wear."

The following description of how we pulled through that awful decade is typical of the struggle of the majority of Negroes and whites. Mr. Albert Martin rented us a one-room log cabin with about five acres of land for one dollar a month. Everything we could raise on these five acres belonged to our family. In addition to this he gave us all the land we could till on the condition that we gave him one-third of what we produced. Our big job, and as humorous as it may seem to you, a big job sure enough, was to raise this one dollar every month for rent and to pay for a yoke of oxen which we had bought on the installment plan. These oxen hauled our firewood, plowed our fields and carried our produce to the Big Lick Market which was about fifteen miles distant; they often carried us to church on Sunday. It required about six years to pay for these oxen. Old Buck and Bill died about a year after our last installment was met, and we had shoes made from their hides. It was the first time the whole

family had had new shoes at one time. Up to my eighth year I had only three pairs of shoes. Many a time on a frosty morning or when the ground was covered with snow I made the cow get up so I could warm my feet on the ground where she had lain for the night.

In my seventh year I started to school. Up to this time my wearing apparel consisted of one tow shirt a week. It mattered not how dirty and greasy, I had to work, play, eat and sleep in this shirt for seven days. The punishment during the night administered to my body by the cheap coarse flax in these shirts and the knots in the old corn-shuck ticks made it a pleasure to get up at five o'clock in the morning when I was called or when the other eight inmates of our cabin began to stir. We slept, bathed, cooked, ate and entertained in this one room. Breakfast was served religiously at 6 A.M.; it generally consisted of fried pork and corn pone cooked in the skillet or in the ashes, and coffee made of rye. Once in a while we had white bread, ham and molasses on Sunday morning. I recall one year when our crops were so poor that both our corn and wheat were exhausted in the month of April, and we lived on dried apples and black-eyed peas for six weeks until the new crops matured. Even to this day the smell of dried apples nauseates me.

The first big day in my life was October 1, 1871. On that day I discarded my old tow shirt, put on a pair of trousers woven by my grandmother and started to school. The school was five miles from our cabin and was taught by a white man named Jake Bowles. That

morning when I entered the log school house, I could not name a single letter. The alphabet looked to me like a crossword puzzle. When school dismissed that evening, I could name the twenty-six letters which make the English language. The next day I said them backwards.

Mr. Bowles declared me a brilliant boy and prophesied that I would some day take his place as teacher in Franklin County. For the next four years this white man was my best friend and worked hard to make his prophecy come true. When my stepfather learned that I was promoted from the ABC class to the spelling class on the third day in school, he handed me the Gospel According to St. John saying, "If you can read this through to me by the time school closes (which was March 30, 1872), I will send you to a boarding school when you are twelve years old." This promise—boarding school—which meant to me plenty to eat and no more work on the farm, together with the flattery of my teacher came near unbalancing my mind. I rehearsed my lessons all night in my sleep, keeping the whole cabin awake.

During the first six months in school I memorized Webster's Blue Back Spelling Book, the First Reader and most of the Second Reader. On the last Sunday in March, 1872, I sat under a walnut tree in front of our cabin and read the entire Gospel According to St. John to my stepfather and the astonished men and women he had invited. I read and re-read this Gospel as it was the only book in our home beside my school books.

There was not a picture or a timepiece in our house. We judged the time by the position of the sun or the crowing of the cocks. I never saw a clock or a train until I was ten years old. The first clock I saw struck eleven times while I was looking at it. To me it was finer music than can be now made by Duke Ellington's band. On being told that it would strike twelve the next time, I waited one hour for the encore.

Every scrap of paper my stepfather found he brought home for me to read. On my seventh birthday he subscribed for a paper published weekly in Washington. Then I became a world citizen and contracted a disease called wanderlust. For some unknown reason no names either foreign or domestic appealed to my imagination like Alabama and California. I devoured everything the newspapers said about those two states. I was the proud owner of two "stick horses" at that time, and I named them after these states. I planned again and again to ride them to California and Alabama. Although this plan never materialized, I did ride the iron and steel horses to California four times and the steamship twice around America and through the Panama Canal to the City of Angels and the Golden Gate.

Through this weekly paper we learned that men could earn a dollar a day and women twelve dollars a month in West Virginia. In the early fall of 1875, we sold the mules, cows, hogs and chickens which we had accumulated during the last three years by selling our tobacco crops in the ready and rising market. And after

a train ride of two days and nights (it is now eight hours) we landed at Tompkin's farm situated on the banks of the Kanawha River just opposite Colesburg, West Virginia. My stepfather took charge of the Tompkin's stable and farm for one dollar a day, my mother took charge of the Tompkin's kitchen for twelve dollars a month and I took charge of the Tompkin's cows for fifty dollars a year. This was a great promotion for all of us. All I had received up to that time was ten cents a day for picking up apples for a brandy still.

My education was interrupted the first year in West Virginia because there was no school within miles of our house. At the end of our first year on the Tompkin's farm we moved to Paint Creek on the other side of the Kanawha River, where a lock and dam were being built by the Federal Government. I resumed my studies again under the direction of Mrs. Addie Bowles. I learned all she knew in less than two years, for her education did not go beyond compound fractions. All her pupils who finished fractions were told by her that they did not know them well and she made them repeat. I got tired of this deception and left school.

One good thing came out of my school life in West Virginia. When I was in my thirteenth year, I overtook on one cold winter morning, a little girl seven years my junior on the way to the same school. She was trying to get over the open bridge which was covered with ice. I assisted her across the bridge. This was

often repeated, either by accident or by prearrangement. This big-brother attention ripened into a friendship which twelve years later changed her name from Mattie Fletcher Shaffer to Mrs. A. Clayton Powell, who proved to be a good minister's wife. Two children were born of this union, namely, Blanche Fletcher and Adam Clayton, Jr. Both were born in New Haven, Blanche on July 24, 1898, and Adam on November 29, 1908. Blanche eventually became a stenographer with the Board of Education of the City of New York, and Adam is the successor of his father in the Abyssinia pulpit.

Aside from my meeting with Mattie Fletcher Shaffer, my eight years' sojourn in West Virginia was a mental and moral disaster. If there were five men over twenty years of age living at the time in Kanawha Valley between Malden and Hawksnest with high moral ideals or literary aspirations I never met them. The chief aim of the average man was to possess a pistol, a pair of brass knuckles and a jug of hard liquor. Fights were numerous and life was cheap. I soon became a part of all I met.

Not a man advised me to read a good book or to aspire to anything noble during these years. The itinerant preachers who stopped at our house exhorted me to seek the Lord, but I did not take them seriously because they could drink more liquor and eat more stolen chickens with less compunction of conscience than I. Perhaps the chief reason for my antagonistic feeling towards these ministers was that they ate all

the chicken except the neck, head and feet. I still possess a very good set of teeth which I attribute to the chewing of chicken bones in my early teens.

In the absence of any guiding star, I read such books as *Jesse James, Peck's Bad Boy, The Arkansas Traveller, Sut Loving Goods* and *The Blunders of a Bashful Man.* These books plus my companions made me a cheap edition of a desperado. To keep from being lynched or murdered, I went to Rendville, Ohio, in August, 1884. This was the most lawless and ungodly place I have ever seen. Every house on Main Street except the mayor's office and the post office was used as a gambling place. To the vices brought from West Virginia, I added gambling, the most vice-like of all the vices.

I secured a job in the coal mines of W. P. Rend, after whom Rendville was named, where I made from eighty to one hundred dollars a month, but every dollar of this and all I could borrow was sacrificed to the demon of gambling which possessed me, soul and body. On March 1, 1885, I had lost all my wages, forty dollars of borrowed money and my overcoat. Aside from my dirty mining clothes, my wardrobe had been reduced to a pair of cheap trousers and a red sweater.

Something happened that week stranger than any piece of fiction I ever read. The saloons and the gambling dens were deserted Saturday night, and people walked the streets in hushed silence. I learned that all the drifting Christians who were the main supporters of the dives had gone to the Methodist and

Baptist churches on Friday night. With less than a dozen faithful members, each of these two churches had begun a week of prayer on January first of that year which had continued nightly for two months. No evangelist or gospel singer had been imported, no advertising had been done and no invitations had been issued. It seemed as if some unseen messenger had slipped into every home, hut, dive, den and whispered, "Something is going to happen at the churches; come out and witness it for yourself." With a feeling akin to terror, I crept back early that Saturday night to my lodging house. I passed more than a hundred people on the streets, and they all knew me but not a one spoke to me. Some of the strong men were crying.

On Sunday morning, Henry Tolliver (a relative of our family by marriage), and I started out. It was our custom on Sunday to go to his saloon and gambling house, which was the largest in town. On our way we had to pass the two churches. For some strange reason, instead of keeping ahead, I turned to the right and pushed my way into the Baptist church in time to see Rev. D. B. Houston, the pastor, rise to take his text and fall to the floor under strong religious emotions. He did not utter a word, but it was the most effective sermon I have ever heard. Within five minutes, more than fifty persons in every part of the church joyfully accepted Christ. This scene sent an arrow of conviction to my wicked heart and I made a hasty exit for the street.

As I stood outside, as far as I could see in every

direction, people were seeking and finding the Lord. I had often heard the ex-slaves pray that the day would come when the hillsides would be covered with mourners and the church doors would be crowded with young converts. Here at Rendville on that Sunday and the remainder of that week I saw a literal answer to that prayer. The churches were kept open night and day until the following Saturday. The coal mines were shut down for a week, businesses of all kinds were suspended and the whole town, including Henry Tolliver and the author of this book, was converted to christianity.

That week I saw Mr. Tolliver and other saloon-keepers roll their liquor barrels into Main Street and empty them. I saw the gamblers gather their gambling apparatus and make a bonfire of it in the same street. In one week every saloon and gambling house disappeared.

Five preachers came out of that revival and this writer was one of them. Genuine religious experience does make one a new creature.

When I celebrated my twentieth birthday on May 5, 1885, less than two months after my conversion, I had returned the forty dollars I had borrowed, purchased a new suit of clothes, had been made secretary of the Sunday school and was reading the Bible and all other good books I could borrow. That winter I attended the Rendville Academy, making my tuition by serving as janitor of the school. I was appointed deputy marshal by Mayor Tuppins and was encouraged in

every way by him and the postmaster, Mr. Sandy Jones, to repair my sin-broken vessel. I had stemmed the fierce tide of sin and made it to the harbor of Grace, and now I must hoist sails and try another ocean.

Chapter 2

UNKNOWN SEAS

Jesus, Savior, pilot me,
Over life's tempestuous sea;
Unknown waves before me roll,
Hiding rock and treach'rous shoal;
Chart and compass come from thee,
Jesus, Savior, pilot me.

Edward Hopper

ONE is never to be condemned for trying to do the right thing even if done in the wrong way. Those who honestly seek Heaven will never miss it regardless of the paths they take. Shakespeare was right when he said, "There is a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we may." From March 10, 1885, until now I have been motivated by high ideals and noble aspirations, but I have not always used the right methods to reach these ends.

Through books, newspapers and association, I had become acquainted with Frederick Douglass, B. K. Bruce, John M. Langston, John R. Lynch, Senator Revills and ex-Governor Pinchback. I, too, wanted to go to Congress or receive Federal appointments. This was a laudable ambition, but I made two mistakes.

First, I overrated myself, and secondly, I took the wrong path.

In 1887, I started to Congress by applying in person for admission to the law school of Howard University. I had no previous correspondence with the school regarding the matriculating qualifications. You can imagine my discouragement on being told that I was neither mentally nor financially prepared to become a student in the law department. It was a mistake to go to Howard University, but it was not a mistake to go to Washington. Here I made contacts and acquaintances that proved helpful through life.

I secured a good job at the Howard House, Pennsylvania Avenue and 6th Street. The owner of this hotel, Mr. J. B. Scott, a southern white gentleman to the manner born, gave me every opportunity to improve myself mentally and financially. When he learned of my student qualities and ambitions, he gave me from two to three hours off every day to read. During that year I read the works of Shakespeare and the Bible through. While I had not the slightest desire to preach, I possessed a better knowledge of the Bible than the average preacher. I have often been complimented on my ability to season my sermons with fitting biblical quotations and scriptural allusions. If this is a deserved compliment, it is because my stepfather encouraged me to read the whole Book of John at least twenty times before I was ten years old, and because Mr. Scott gave me the opportunity to read the Bible through the first year at the Howard House.

During the summer of 1888, I was seized with an unquenchable desire to preach. My mind was suddenly and completely turned from the law to the Gospel. September of that year found me in the Wayland Seminary and College, situated on Meridian Hill, D. C. This institution is now the Virginia Union University, Richmond, Virginia. I was admitted to the Normal-Academic and Theological Departments without examination. In order to finish the two departments in four years, I found it necessary to take nine subjects two days of the week and seven the other three days.

I made one painful mistake during the four years at Wayland. Mr. Scott, proprietor of the Howard House, assured me that I could work for him during my school vacations. This I did during the first two summers and made sufficient money to meet my school obligations. The third summer I allowed Colonel A. B. Meeker of Chicago to persuade me to leave Mr. Scott and take charge of his estate on the Potomac River, near Quantico. I declined to accept my salary, telling him that I preferred it to be paid in a lump sum when school opened the last of September. That month the Colonel and "Deacon" White attempted to corner the corn market, and the Colonel lost every cent he had including his private yacht and his Potomac Estate. I went back to Wayland with twenty dollars left over from the previous year's savings and no overcoat. Mrs. Meeker sent me one of the Colonel's top coats and one of his Prince Alberts. The coat was worn two years

later when I was selected class orator at the commencement exercises.

About the middle of October, a benevolent man of wealth from New Bedford, Massachusetts, visited the school. It was the custom of the President, Dr. G. M. P. King, to assemble the entire student body in Coborn Hall when distinguished people honored the institution with their presence. After the rendition of several spirituals, the President called upon me to describe the aims of the school. I was scared stiff, but must have said something that impressed our visitor for as soon as he left the campus, I was called to the President's office and informed that this gentleman had offered to give me a fifteen hundred dollar scholarship which would have not only enabled me to finish my two courses at Wayland but, at that time, would have paid my expenses at almost any college in America for four years.

The scholarship was to be given on the condition that I would give up all other means of earning money and spend my vacations doing missionary work in the south at places designated by him, and that I would finally teach and preach in the south after the completion of my education. When I hesitated to say yes or no, the President said, "I will expect your answer by tomorrow morning."

Up to this time no one, not even my parents, had helped me with my education. I wanted to be known as a self-made man.

In those days, the toilets were in the back yard and

were called water closets. The student who cared for these closets received his room, board and tuition, but he lost his social standing with his fellow students. For this reason it was hard to find a water-closet attendant. The school had been in session three weeks and no one had been found for this job.

The next morning I declined the scholarship and asked for the job which meant social ostracism. With a voice and look that unnerved me, the President said, "You may be excused." Within thirty minutes the bell rang calling me back to his office. I was appointed head-waiter of the dining hall. I had asked for the most dishonorable job and was given the most honorable position any student could hold in the institution. This position met all my school expenses, and I held it until I was graduated. The President never again mentioned the scholarship or the water-closet job. But from that day until he fell asleep at Virginia Union University, he was the best friend I have ever known.

No man or set of men exercised the influence over my life that Dr. G. M. P. King of Maine exercised. When I went to Virginia Union to speak while he lived and taught there, I was not allowed to sleep in a student dormitory but was always invited to stay in his home. He would come in my room at night, tuck the cover around my feet, kneel by my bedside and offer a prayer whose influence I feel until this day. I am indebted to him for two diplomas from Virginia Union University in 1892 and for the honorary degree of D.D. in 1904. If all the Christians in the world proved

unfaithful, I would still know that Christ lived on earth during my lifetime because I met Dr. King.

He trusted me for two years not only with the boys and girls of the dining room, but as monitor of the boys on my floor, and the latter was a greater responsibility than the former. I betrayed this confidence once and I have never repented of it nor even confessed it until now. No student was allowed to leave the building after 10 P.M. without a written excuse from the monitor. This was one of the strictest rules of the institution, and dismissal from school was the penalty for its violation.

At the beginning of my third school year I decided that if I were going to be a successful minister, I must not merely be good but I must do good. I therefore resolved that no day should pass that year without registering something said or done to help another person. The opportunities that presented themselves for helping others were surprising and delightfully satisfying. The memory of them helped me to sleep nights.

One cold stormy night, with the snow about ten inches thick and still falling, I made my usual rounds at 10 o'clock to see that all lights were out, and then I retired. I searched for my altruistic actions, but they were not there. I had not on that day helped a backward student with his lessons or even uttered a kind word to a lonesome or discouraged soul. After trying in vain to sleep I dressed in the dark to keep from attracting attention and tiptoed out into the hall. I was

afraid to go out the front door downstairs; instead I went to the west end of the building and crawled down the ice- and snow-covered fire escape.

I had not the remotest idea where I was going or for what. Down Meridian Hill and 14th Street I plodded through the deep snow. Standing under the lamppost in the flying snow at T Street, was a poorly clad ten-year-old girl. It was then almost midnight. I said, "Dear, what are you doing here at this late hour?" As I looked at the paths her tears had made down her soiled cheeks, she said in a crying voice, "My father was buried a month ago, I have a little brother two weeks old, and mother and I have not had anything to eat today. Mother told me to come here and stand under this lamppost and that God would send someone along to give us a loaf of bread."

In all this wide world I had ten cents and I gave it to that little hungry child. I immediately turned and retraced my steps to the school. I never was so happy in my life; it was the nearest I ever came to shouting. I learned that night, once and for all that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

I have been told that according to my means I am one of the most liberal givers among the ministers in the United States. If this is true, the credit belongs to the little girl who, with tear-stained face and choked emotions on that stormy midnight long long ago, opened the benevolent arteries of my soul so wide that I have never been able to close or contract them. I

learned that night that the steps of a man with right intentions are ordered of the Lord, and though he may tramp many unknown and devious paths, he will always end at the right place.

Chapter 3

THE POLESTAR

Live for something, have a purpose,
And that purpose keep in view;
Drifting like a helmless vessel,
Thou canst ne'er to life be true.
Half the wrecks that strew life's ocean,
If some star had been their guide,
Might have now been riding safely,
But they drifted with the tide.

Robert Whitaker

IF IT is true that a great teacher teaches his pupil more by what he is than by what he says, then it is also certain that all the students who came under the moulding influence of Dr. King will testify that he was one of the greatest if not the greatest teacher sent south at the close of the Civil War by the Baptist Home Mission Society. Perhaps there were teachers more brilliant and with a broader education, but none excelled him in character. What he was always spoke more loudly than what he said. Today I recall a very few things he said, but what he was is still moulding and directing my life. To me he possessed the magnetism of the polestar. His life radiated beauty, good-

ness, courage, honesty, truth and love. These virtues cannot be taught by words. They can only be imparted by a life which possesses them in great abundance.

A few days after my graduation in 1892, he sent me to St. Paul, Minnesota, to arrange with the Pilgrim Baptist Church to become its minister. The church paid one hundred dollars a month and I could easily have been elected pastor. But it would have caused great embarrassment and perhaps permanent injury to the man who had been their pastor for several years and who wanted to remain despite the fact that the church had accepted his resignation. I wanted that church and I wanted that one hundred dollars a month, for only a few star preachers at that time were receiving such a munificent salary. But the teacher who sent me to St. Paul had taught me for four years by his own life to be true to myself, and if I were going to be true to myself, I could not be false to any man. I returned to the east. I stepped off the train at Atlantic City with forty cents in my pocket.

Two weeks later I accepted a call to the Ebenezer Baptist Church of Philadelphia. I learned the first week of my pastorate that the mortgage on the church had been foreclosed and that the property would be sold in thirty days. As a stranger in the city, without any experience whatsoever in raising money, I started out to secure five hundred dollars, which I had been told would stay the auctioneer's hammer. The day previous to the date fixed for the sale, I went, with three hundred and fifty dollars and plenty of tears in

my voice and eyes, to the lawyer who was directing the foreclosure. He did the astounding thing of giving me a check for the one hundred and fifty dollars needed. The church property at Mt. Vernon and Broad Streets was not sold until many years later when the congregation moved into a larger and better edifice.

I remained pastor of the Ebenezer Church until July, 1893, at a salary of eight dollars a week. How did we live on that amount? We paid four dollars a week for our bedroom with use of kitchen and dining room. I gave Mrs. Powell two dollars and fifty cents each week to buy food, and she knew how to make every cent count. This left us one dollar and fifty cents a week for clothing, carfare, doctors and medicine.

A young minister with a flapper wife said to me not long ago that he and his wife could not live on two hundred dollars a month. I related the story of the early financial struggle of Mrs. Powell and myself, saying to him, "We began at the bottom and worked up; the average young couple begins now at the top and falls down."

On the first Sunday in July the church officers handed me eight dollars, my last week's salary and voted me a month's vacation without pay. With four dollars left of the eight, we went to Atlantic City. Mrs. Powell secured a position as seamstress, and I exchanged my long preacher's coat for a waiter's jacket and apron and went to work in the old Windsor Hotel. We made enough money in a few weeks to pay Funk & Wagnalls one hundred and fifty dollars for books

purchased on time and got enough to eat to rebuild our run-down bodies.

While working in this hotel I was invited to preach at the Immanuel Baptist Church at New Haven, Connecticut. Without my knowledge Drs. Theodore Miller and L. G. Jordan had recommended me to the congregation. On the first Sunday in September I became pastor of that church, succeeding George H. Jackson, S.T.B., M.A., M.D. who had gone as medical missionary to French Congo, Africa. After two years Dr. Jackson returned to New Haven to practice medicine. Later President McKinley appointed him United States Consul at La Rochelle, France.

I found the Immanuel Church well organized, but during the six years of his pastorate Dr. Jackson had been too busy earning two degrees from Yale University to evangelize his church. In fact this was the most obvious weakness of all the colored churches in New Haven. There were seven of them and I did not find the evangelistic note in a single one. It seemed that all the preachers felt the shadow of Yale during the preparation and delivery of their sermons, although the Yale students never came to hear them. The church services, the literary societies, the social functions of the colored people were all Yale shadows without Yale intelligence, Yale wealth or the true Yale spirit. These imitations of the social gatherings of Yale were usually held on Saturday night. For this reason none of the colored churches held a Sunday morning service; services were held at three o'clock or seven-thirty.

The explosion of a bomb in the colored section of the city could not have created more comment than the announcement that the Immanuel Church, beginning the second Sunday in September, would hold its services at eleven in the morning and seven-thirty in the evening. Those who prophesied that we would not have a baker's dozen came late looking for a verification of their prophecy and had to stand against the walls. The auditorium was packed with members of all the churches and all the pastors were present. On that Sunday these pastors announced at their three and seven-thirty services that they would preach the following Sunday at eleven. From then until now every church has held a morning service.

Another reason for the low spiritual vitality of New Haven was a lack of Christian fellowship among the churches. I learned that the Baptist church had never exchanged pulpits with the churches of other denominations. At my suggestion we organized an interdenominational ministers meeting at which we decided to hold a union service on the fourth Sunday afternoon in each month. These fellowship and inspirational services not only continued during my ministry there, but the seven churches often united in their evangelistic campaigns which stirred and fired the city. Perhaps I am the first Baptist preacher of the colored race in America to advocate the coming together of all denominations to save the world.

A sermon preached by me, on "The Significance of the Hour" was printed in New Haven in 1906. In that

sermon I urged that we lay aside our denominational prejudices and petty jealousies and unite to bring a lost world back to Christ. This sermon was not delivered at a Methodist conference but at the dedication of the First African Baptist Church, Philadelphia.

When the colored preachers gave up their denominational limitations, ceased trying to preach to the heads of Yale students and began to appeal to their hearts with the simple Gospel, it was not only an ordinary thing to count a dozen students at a morning service, but many of them became helpful workers in the church and Sunday school. Drs. I. N. Porter, Fletcher Penn; A. M. Robinson, a law student; H. H. Proctor, T. Nelson Baker, Clifford L. Miller, Wm. H. Ferris, Divinity School students, and many others who have since become famous in their professions were not Baptists, but attended the Immanuel Church and helped the pastor shape its destiny. Our home was a place of social ease and rest for these students. Many of them encouraged and helped me as a special student in the Yale Divinity School, during 1895-96.

I am especially indebted to Dr. Porter for assisting me in philosophy and to Dr. Ferris in helping me in Hebrew. The great-grandfather of Dr. Porter was an African prince of the Kafir tribe. His blood stream had not been polluted by any other race. His head was full of gray matter which had been cultivated at Lincoln and Yale and by the wide reading of the Greek, German and English classics. He was more familiar with Immanuel Kant than any man with whom I have ever

talked. He was often consulted by the leading physicians. It was a common thing for this black man to sit at the bedside in the most cultured homes and bring the children of millionaires into the world. Until he was caught between the upper and nether millstones of Wall Street, any bank in New Haven would have accepted his note for a hundred thousand dollars. For several years, if circumstances permitted, he came to my study every Monday not to praise me but to help me preach a better sermon and conduct a better service the following Sunday by pointing out the weaknesses of the sermon and the service the previous Sunday. I say gratefully and unhesitatingly that next to Dr. King, Dr. Porter is the most helpful friend I have had during my long public career.

From the time I discovered myself and learned, by the aid of Dr. King, why I was in the world I never lost my polestar or swerved from my purpose but once. How this happened fits into my story here and I am going to relate it now. If the skeptics and humanists doubt it, there are still people living in New Haven who know it is true.

During my first year in New Haven I discovered that the Immanuel Church was rich in traditions, that there were men and women either directly or indirectly connected with the church and its history who helped to build the religious, moral, political, economic and social foundations of the Negro race in America. Its pastors were among the best-educated and the best-known ministers of the race. Dr. T. D. Miller, the

scholarly pastor of the Cherry St. Baptist Church of Philadelphia, was pastor in 1854. Elder Leonard A. Black, who was pastor of the Harrison St. Baptist Church of Petersburg, Virginia, was pastor of the Immanuel Church from 1863 to 1871. He spent nine months of that time in England preaching in some of the best churches and brought back enough money to clear his church of all indebtedness. When Elder Black died in April, 1883, a Petersburg daily, the *Index Appeal,* said that his funeral was one of the largest ever held in Virginia, and that he was the best-informed colored minister in the state. Revs. J. Gardner Ross and H. H. Johnson also were pastors of Immanuel, both of whom were graduates of Newton Theological Seminary. In 1894, Rev. Johnson was considered the wealthiest colored man in New England. Mrs. Julia Harris, who was a distinguished member of Mother A. M. E. Zion Church in New York from 1814 to 1837, helped organize the Immanuel Church. The Harris-Gibbs family represented one of the best-known families in America. Henry Hyland Garnett belonged to this family. Mrs. Julia Pennington Gibbs Muse was a granddaughter of Mrs. Julia Harris. She was the first colored teacher in New Haven and a potent influence in Immanuel Church. Her father, Hon. Jonathan C. Gibbs, a graduate of Princeton, was Secretary of the State of Florida under Governor Reed and State Superintendent of Public Instruction under Governor Hart. She was the sister of Hon. Thomas V. Gibbs, a member of the Florida Legislature and a niece

of Judge Gibbs of Little Rock, Arkansas, the first colored man elected to a judgeship in the United States.

I felt that these and many other important and historical facts which my investigation revealed ought to be permanently recorded in print. By November 1, 1895, at a great cost in money and time I had written a little book of seventy-seven pages with the long but modest title, *A Souvenir of the Immanuel Baptist Church—Its Pastors and Members.* It took every cent I had plus forty dollars I borrowed to meet the last payment on the cost of publication. I made a promissory note for the amount borrowed, payable on or before the Monday following the fourth Sunday in November, 1895. This arrangement was made because it would give me three Sundays to sell the books at seventy-five cents each and two Sundays to get my November salary which was sixty-five dollars.

At that time the church had no bank account. The second and fourth Sundays of each month were set apart for the raising of the pastor's salary. The other Sundays were dedicated to the raising of the remainder of the current expenses.

It began to rain on Friday and rained every hour right through the second Sunday, as it only can rain in New England. The church is a mile from the colored center and when it rains very few worshipers venture that far. There were not twelve people at church all day and the offering was just three dollars. My disappointment was noticeable to the Chairman of

the Board of Deacons and he said, "We'll divide the offering with you next Sunday."

It rained all week, and the following Sunday the streets were flooded and the horse cars were stalled. We did not have a service. I never even opened my package of a thousand books. On the Thursday before the fourth Sunday it was still raining as if it never had rained before.

My star was gone, and my purpose to preach and serve others disappeared. Sitting in my study alone about 5 P.M. on that black Thursday, I solemnly resolved never to preach another sermon. I was going to give up my theological studies at the Divinity School, find a job waiting or washing dishes or anything that would help me through Yale Law School, then go south, hang up my shingle, enter politics and get elected to Congress. This was my idea back in Rendville, Ohio, and I was a fool to give it up.

In the midst of this soliloquy I reached for a pen to write my resignation. With tremendous force the thought came to me that I had not prayed. Had not Dr. King taught me that a minister should never accept or leave a church without sincere prayer? I don't know how long I stayed on my knees, but I do know that for the first time in my life I surrendered to God soul and body, and that, like the Wise Men of the East, I had found my lost star.

When I arose from that prayer I owed forty dollars I had borrowed for the books, I owed the grocer eight dollars, the doctor nine dollars and two months'

house rent. Mrs. Powell did not have a pair of shoes she could wear in wet weather. I did not have a decent hat, and there were not two pails of coal in the cellar. I did not have a dollar on earth, but I was a child of the King and I knew that the earth was the Lord's and the fullness thereof.

Friday morning the sky was as blue as steel and the air was as crisp as Saratoga chips. The prayer chapel was filled that night with hungry souls. At the close of the meeting a woman who had disliked me because she loved the other pastor put three dollars in my hand and said, "Buy yourself a hat tomorrow, for that thing you are wearing is a disgrace to our church." It was the first kind thing she had said to me during my two years as pastor. Had she slapped me in the face I would not have been as greatly surprised. I said to my wife, on reaching home, "Take this three dollars and buy you a pair of shoes tomorrow morning. I can go bareheaded easier than you can go barefooted."

In my mail the next morning was a letter from the First National Bank of New Haven. The letter read, "I know what a time poor preachers have trying to make ends meet. This little check may help tide you over some difficulties." It was signed Peirce N. Welch, President. The check was for forty dollars, the amount of my promissory note due the following Monday. Up to that time I had not seen Mr. Welch or written him a line. A high note of gratitude was sounded in our morning devotions.

Mrs. Powell left at 8.30 A.M. for the shoe store. A

half hour later Mr. Robert L. Reed and Mr. Whitby, a race-horse man, drove up and left a package with me for Mrs. Powell. We had an understanding the day of our marriage that we would never open each other's mail or packages. The excitement was running too high to remember such an agreement. The box contained a pair of five-dollar shoes from the New Haven Shoe Store, the best that could be purchased at that time. I started for the store to keep her from buying the three-dollar shoes. I met her and a young man from the Episcopal Church at the gate. I wanted her to take the shoes back, but he argued that every woman should have two pairs of shoes (such luxury!) and clinched his argument by giving her half the price of the shoes she had purchased.

All standing room was occupied at both services on Sunday. My month's salary was raised and the books were sold faster than two people could handle them. By 4 P.M. the next day the forty dollar note had been satisfied, the grocer's and the doctor's bills met and two months' house rent had been paid. I had a hat, Mrs. Powell had two pairs of shoes, there were two tons of coal in the cellar and I was packing my bag to go to the Atlanta Exposition.

From that day until now, I have never wanted for anything I needed.

I went to Atlanta because I wanted to see how far the white south had recovered from the physical destruction wrought by the march of Sherman's Army and from the bad feeling created by the political rule

of the carpetbaggers, and I especially wanted to see how far the black south had gotten from slavery and ignorance in thirty years. Dr. Booker T. Washington's hand-and-finger-cast-down-your-bucket-where-you-are speech is the best yard stick by which to measure the progress of both races up to that time. That the white south invited one of its former slaves to speak at its first great exposition was the most conclusive evidence of its progress, and that the black south could produce in three decades a man who pronounced the only platform ever offered upon which the two races could live and work together furnishes the strongest illustration of the progress made by the ex-slaves. President Grover Cleveland in writing about the speech said, "I think the Exposition would be fully justified if it did not do more than to furnish the opportunity for its delivery." The *Boston Transcript* declared the same week that the speech dwarfed all other proceedings and the Exposition itself. Mr. Clark Howell, the editor of the *Atlanta Constitution* proclaimed it "one of the most notable speeches both as to character and as to the warmth of its reception ever delivered to a Southern audience."

The emotional enthusiasts of both races declared the race problem solved, but the calm, painstaking students of history know that you cannot evolve by a fifteen-minute speech what it took two hundred and forty years to involve. It seems that those in charge of the Negro exhibit anticipated these false conclusions and arranged in advance to dissolve them. Standing in front

of the Negro building was a piece of carving which warned both races not to expect too much from Dr. Washington's thrilling address. This carving represented a young colored man of athletic build with a determination on his face akin to fright. On each of his extended arms was a handcuff and from each handcuff dangled a bit of broken chain. It looked as if by some superhuman effort he had broken the chain which held his hands together. Upon the base of the statue were these significant words, "Broken, but not off." The chain of slavery had been broken but the handcuffs of ignorance, superstition, prejudice, intolerance and injustice were still on the Negro.

Every sensible colored man and every benevolent white man left Atlanta with a resolution to rededicate his life to the removal of these handcuffs. Dr. Washington's notable speech was not a solution but a great inspiration to those who were working for solution of the race problem.

I had already lectured all over the eastern states on "The Stumbling Blocks of the Race" and "My Black Cats." To these I added a third lecture, "Broken, but Not Off" which caused me to be invited to California that winter where I spoke on these subjects at San Diego, Los Angeles and San Francisco to capacity houses composed of both races. While there I prepared a lecture on my trip to California which I was invited to deliver twenty times in the north.

My income now from lectures and evangelistic campaigns was larger than my salary. My Black Cat lec-

ture helped me to buy a home in New Haven and inspired the Odd Fellows of that city to build the finest hall owned by the race in New England. Many have suggested that because of the popularity of this cat lecture in those days it should have a place in my book, but space will not permit this. Instead I am inserting a report from the *Palladium*, a New Haven daily paper, which will give a slight idea of the lessons gotten from the cats:

"Last evening the Rev. A. C. Powell, Pastor of the Immanuel Baptist Church, spoke on the subject, 'My Black Cats.' His remarks were in part as follows: 'Five years ago a neighbor living on Orchard Street presented me with two black kittens which had been forsaken by their mother. At first I was opposed to taking them as I used to share the popular superstition in regard to black cats, but the neighbor urged that since it was my duty to care for the widows and orphans I ought also to care for these cats. They were named Trilby and Billy. Now the very first thing the cats taught me was to see men and things. This I hold was a very necessary thing in the colored race.'

"In illustration he told the story of a young man who went to Harvard University to study science. The professor put him in a room with a fish in a glass jar and left him there with the injunction to use his eyes. At his return the professor asked him what he saw. He replied, 'A fish in a glass jar.' 'Look again,' said the professor and again left him. This he did for some

days until the young man could describe every part of the fish and tell him all about it. This, the preacher said, was a prime requisite of his people, the necessity of seeing the opportunities before them. Then the preacher found that the cats were jealous of each other, for whenever he would enter the home the cat which first climbed upon him was pulled off by the other.

'Now I will give you proof that this is a great fault of our people,' he went on. 'Before election Mr. Theodore H. MacDonald, chairman of the Republican County Committee, came to me and said that about fifteen colored men came to him, each claiming to be the leader of the colored voters and when he told of the other fourteen who claimed a like power he denied them saying, "I am the leader." The upshoot of the whole matter is that the colored people did not get a single appointment.

'You will notice up to this time I have been speaking about two cats. One of them died about six months ago.' He described in humorous manner, telling how the neighbors gave one reason or another for its death, consumption, heart disease and the like. The real reason was because he lacked push. 'So do the colored people,' said Mr. Powell. 'Nowadays a colored man must stand on his merits. They must not expect the white man to put them in positions as in the past; they must earn places themselves. The white man has two hands, the colored man has three—right hand, left hand and behind hand.' Here he told of a friend of his who

dreamed he died and went to Judgment. Yet, he saw but few colored people there. Three days later as he stood on the great jasper walls he saw a great crowd. It was his people coming to Judgment—three days late. . . . He closed by recommending to his people Chauncey M. Depew's words to a graduating class, 'Stick, dig and save.' "

The noted Alexander Crummel who heard me speak in Newport on "The Stumbling Blocks of the Race" offered to raise a fund among the rich of that city if I would resign my church and deliver the lecture in every town where there were one hundred colored people. This I publicly declined with sincere thanks for the compliment.

In June, 1900, I was elected delegate to the World's Christian Endeavor Convention which was held in London, England. After spending three weeks in England, during which time I had the pleasure of seeing Queen Victoria and worshiping in Spurgeon's Tabernacle, I went to the United States Consulate at La Rochelle, France as the guest for ten days of Hon. George H. Jackson. We spent another ten days seeing Paris and the Paris Exposition. To my growing list of lectures I added "Twenty Days in Balmy France" which threatened for awhile to steal the popularity from the rest of my lectures. At that time, December 13, 1900, Mr. William Tribitt was a member of the *Philadelphia Tribune* staff; I will let him describe the lecture:

"Many times have we heard the assertion made that the colored people of this city could not be persuaded to attend lectures because they are 'dry,' hence their lack of interest in such entertainments, etc. But both the assertion and the alleged cause were plainly disproved last Thursday evening, the 13th, at the Immanuel Baptist Church, when the popular pastor and lecturer, Rev. A. C. Powell, told the story of his visit to France, and his experiences and observations during his twenty days' sojourn in that balmy clime. The lecturer's description of his voyage across the rough English channel, his arrival at the French port, where United States Consul Dr. George H. Jackson met him; his attempt to relish the French lunch of donkey sausage and cheese almost decomposed, were both amusing and interesting. But his graphic description of his travel of three hundred miles to the United States Consulate at that historic city, La Rochelle, and his picture of those impregnable walls which surround the city, appeared to hold the audience spellbound. Except when he would confess his futile efforts to understand the French language or make himself understood by the French servants, to listen to the recital of even these trifling incidents in his travel knocked the word 'dry' into the water and would have driven Napoleon into laughing hysterics could he have heard them. His interesting description of visits to the Paris Exposition among the special features of which was the Afro-American exhibit, in the American Building, where the

many industries and arts of the American Negro were exposed to the eye of the world, were graphic and entertaining. This Negro exhibit worked wonders in laying bare to the world the capabilities and accomplishments of the race, and did much to prove the Negro equal in intellect to any other race. Rev. Powell, Dr. Jackson, Dr. DuBoise, Mr. and Mrs. Herndon, Meta Vaux Warick, Madam Noble and other distinguished Americans were given a banquet in the Negro Building which was under the supervision of Prof. Calloway."

Despite the fact that I was gadding about all over the country, the Immanuel congregation grew so rapidly that we were forced to enlarge the church edifice. This was done at a cost of ten thousand dollars, all except six hundred dollars of which was paid by the date of rededication. This was a financial miracle for those days and was made possible by the generosity of my good white friends. Mr. Peirce N. Welch, President of the First National Bank, led with a contribution of five hundred dollars. He was followed by such distinguished men as Mr. Julius Twiss, Secretary-Treasurer of the Connecticut Savings Bank, Dr. Anson Phelps Stokes, Secretary of Yale University, and Judge Livingston W. Cleveland of the Probate Court. Among the hundreds of white friends in Connecticut none was more interested in my career or did more to advance it than did Judge Cleveland.

And here I want gratefully to acknowledge my indebtedness to the white Baptist ministers of Connecti-

cut. On my arrival they welcomed me as a brother beloved and during the fifteen and a half years of my stay, not a single one of them—and many were southerners—even by the faintest implication made me feel that I belonged to a backward race. We exchanged pulpits and I was invited too often for my own comfort to speak for their associations, conventions and ministers' conferences. During the years in New Haven I made an intensive study of the Abolitionists and delivered addresses before the New Haven Ministers' Conference on "The Religion of Frederick Douglass," "John Brown" and "William Lloyd Garrison."

The *Watchman-Examiner*, March 15, 1906, had this to say about my last appearance before the New Haven Ministers' Conference:

"Rev. A. C. Powell, D.D., the highly honored pastor of the Immanuel Baptist Church, read a valuable paper on William Lloyd Garrison. The diction was choice, the spirit and manner of presentation manly, the estimate of the Reformer's character and the result of his life's work admirable. The colored Baptists of New Haven have a strong leader in Dr. Powell."

I was too full of energy to remain long in New Haven. I needed a heavy load to steady me. The opportunity to feel the weight of skyscrapers and heavy obligations presented itself in November, 1908, when a call was extended me from the Abyssinian Baptist Church, New York City. On the last Sunday in De-

cember, 1908, I rounded out fifteen and a half years in New Haven; that week I went to work in New York.

I was given three farewell receptions in New Haven in which all races and denominations participated. Every newspaper in the state had words of praise for my ministry which left behind a church whose membership had been increased from one hundred and thirty-five to six hundred, a church building remodeled at a cost of ten thousand dollars and no debt. These white dailies also expressed their regret that I was leaving the state. Instead of publishing what they said, I am concluding this chapter with an estimate of my career written a few years later by Dr. William H. Ferris. Dr. Ferris was educated at Yale and Harvard and is the author of *The African Abroad*, two volumes which contain more philosophy than any other book written by a Negro. This estimate is valuable to me because it comes from such an eminent man and from one who has known me all his life.

"The magnificent oak tree with powerful roots stretching for yards under the surface of the earth, with massive trunk and wide spreading branches only evolves from the little acorn, because the potencies for its growth and development were locked up in the acorn as potential energy. So it was with the career of Dr. A. Clayton Powell.

"I well remember some thirty odd years ago when I was a school boy in New Haven, Conn., that Dr.

Powell, fresh from college, came to pastor the Immanuel Baptist Church in my native city. Tall, slender, erect, agile in movements, with a manly ring to his voice and the enthusiasm of youth, he made a favorable impression in the town that was known as 'The City of Elms' and as the seat of Yale University.

"He preached eloquent sermons, real sermons. The people said that he had life and fire. They flocked to hear him. Immanuel Baptist Church with a larger seating capacity than other colored churches in New Haven, Conn., was soon crowded to the doors at both the morning and evening services.

"Conscious that he had the personality to win and hold friends and the innate oratorical gifts to hold audiences spellbound, Dr. Powell did not stop there but began to grow and develop intellectually. He attended courses and lectures in the Yale Divinity School, where Dean Henry Park Fisher, with world wide fame as historian, Dr. Samuel Harris, a profound philosopher and Prof. Porter, a New Testament Greek scholar, who had ripened his culture in Germany, held regal sway. Then Dr. Powell read and digested Kidd's 'Social Evolution,' and 'Western Civilization' and other books. When I came to New York City a few years ago I found him still growing, reading and digesting Kidd's 'Science of Power,' Papini's 'Life of Christ' and Durant's 'Story of Philosophy.'

"Then again Dr. Powell had the happy faculty of bringing his talents to bear upon practical problems. In my college days he lectured in a Baptist Church in

Newport, R. I., on 'The Stumbling Blocks of the Negro.' Rev. Dr. Alexander Crummell, the most erudite scholar in the Negro race, George T. Downing, the bosom friend of Charles Summer, the successful caterer who owned a block of houses on the famous Bellvue Avenue in the City by the Sea and Rev. Dr. Mahlon Van Horne, the first colored man to be sent as United States Consul to the Danish West Indies, heard the lecturer. They all rose and used superlatives and piled on the adjectival attributives in describing the brilliant lecture.

"Here we have the four sources of Dr. Powell's power, a manly personality, native preaching ability, a desire to broaden his knowledge and widen his horizon and a passion for serving humanity."

Chapter 4

CONTRARY WINDS

> For a great door and effectual is open unto me, and there are many adversaries.
>
> St. Paul

ON December 31, 1908, I began the active pastorate of the Abyssinian Baptist Church which had just celebrated its one hundredth anniversary. The church was then located in 40th Street between 7th and 8th avenues—the most notorious red-light district in New York City. To make men follow them, prostitutes would snatch their hats and run into hallways. I was located in an old cold-water flat opposite the church, with prostitutes living over me and all around me. A set washtub in the kitchen furnished the only facility for bathing.

When I asked one of the trustees why I was sent to a place like that, he replied that the Board had appointed a member of the opposition to secure me a staying place. I learned for the first time that there was a strong minority composed of some of the most influential members of the church who opposed my election. The leaders of the minority frankly told me that the

former pastor had not had a square deal and that they were fighting to get him back and that this battle would be vigorously waged in the church meeting in January.

To keep from having a church fight, I announced that the new pastor would preach every night during January. People came from every part of Greater New York, packing the auditorium to the doors. The opposition and the troubles out of which it was born were never mentioned by me. About the middle of the month Rev. W. H. Skipwith, singing evangelist, dropped in one night and sang, "The Storm is Passing Over, Hallelujah." It was gratifying to notice that many who were most bitter in their feeling because of their failure to get the pastor they wanted were joining heartily in the singing.

About January 20, under the constant gospel bombardment, the neighborhood began to crack. Pimps, prostitutes, keepers of dives and gambling dens were drawn to the meetings, confessed conversion and were baptized. Many of them remained faithful followers of Christ until death, but the majority went back to wallowing in the mire because they had no place else to go. The neighborhood was never again quite the same and neither was the Abyssinian Church.

A church meeting was called for the third Wednesday in February to name the pastor's salary and arrange for his installation. It was persistently rumored that a woman who had not come under the influence of the January meetings would be at the business meeting

on that evening to put through a motion asking the court to issue an injunction restraining me from being installed as pastor. This woman was a highly respected citizen, a faithful and very influential member of the church. A few of the officers and members were in sympathy with this plan, and I could have been seriously embarrassed at that meeting.

On the Saturday before the business meeting, she suffered what seemed to be a paralytic stroke. She never spoke or regained consciousness. She died Sunday and was buried Tuesday. Every effort to locate the former pastor or secure another minister to conduct the funeral services proved futile. I attended the services as a member of the church and was called upon to perform the entire ceremonies.

The superstitious thought that this was an act of God. I do not know, but I know it had the same effect. The church meeting was all harmony. Not a hand was raised or a voice lifted against the proposed program. I was taken out of the cold-water flat and placed in a modern apartment with the chairman of the Board of Trustees. Father Divine could not have received more reverence than was bestowed upon me that night.

I have learned that when one is being falsely accused, if he will control his temper and hold his peace, the time will come when he will be completely vindicated.

The reader will recall that at the very beginning of my ministry I refused to allow a church in St. Paul, Minnesota, to use my name because I was sure it would

injure the future of the pastor who had resigned but who really wanted to remain as pastor. So it was indeed grievous to me to be accused of consorting with the majority of the members of the Abyssinian Church to prevent the recalling of the illustrious Dr. C. S. Morris who had resigned after a brilliant pastorate of six years. I did not know until the ties which bound me to New Haven were cut, and I had landed in New York bag and baggage, that many of the best members wanted him, and they believed he would have received the call had it not been for my selfish plotting. I was in the most unenviable position of having kept a sick man out of a pulpit which he had been forced to give up, but my hour of vindication came after three months suffering.

I invited Dr. Morris to be the guest preacher one Sunday morning in April. In introducing him I said, "I am here as your pastor because Dr. Morris came to New Haven the day after you extended me a call and stayed in my home until midnight urging and begging me to come to you, declaring that I was the only man in America who could logically succeed him. I decided that night to come and here I am, presenting to you the man whose logic and eloquence brought me to you." Many looked surprised and nudged each other. The majority applauded.

When in the choicest English he confirmed all that I had said and added much more, the whole audience applauded and burst into singing, "Blest Be the Tie that Binds Our Hearts in Christian Love." His friends

became my friends and from that day to this they have been as strong in their friendship as they were stern in their opposition.

As a preacher Dr. Morris was second to none, and as an orator he had few superiors. No man in his generation could excel him in presenting the causes of prohibition and foreign missions, but he was inclined to overlook details and therefore was not at his best as an organizer.

After the first strong contrary wind abated we began to organize the church. Although many people do not realize it, the first important element in any organization is time. If the New York Central Railroad were to start its trains like the average Negro church starts its services, there would be at least thirty wrecks a month. Mr. John H. Page, the able chorister, and I decided we would put some railroad efficiency in our church organization by beginning the services on time. During the twenty-nine years of our agreeable labors together, only once were we more than five minutes late: I was delayed by a blizzard.

To be able to tell at any time the assets and liabilities is another thing very essential to an organization. No understandable statement for the church could be found. Mr. W. C. Cole who had specialized in accountancy was in the New York University graduating class that year. He was employed to audit our books. His search revealed that the church owed at the time of my coming one hundred forty-six thousand, three hundred and fifty-four dollars, and that its bank account had

been overdrawn by more than three hundred dollars. Beyond this he could not find anything to audit.

It is not intended as a reflection on anyone to say that for one hundred years the church had existed without a bookkeeping system which could have been properly examined. If any further proof is needed to show that the church is a divine institution, that proof is furnished in the fact that the Abyssinian Church lived a century in New York despite its slipshod business methods.

Mr. Cole was engaged by the trustees to install an accounting system. This was adopted by the church. It has been improved upon from time to time by Mr. Cole and Mr. Nelson E. Dixon, both of whom majored in accountancy at New York University. This bookkeeping system is still entrusted to three men. One is an accountant of the Transit Commission, the second is an accountant in the Department of Finance and the third is an accountant in the New York Telephone Company. The church has at present an accounting system as modern as can be found in Wall Street. Three men must sign every check and no officer could default without being caught the first week of his defalcation.

The next move in our reorganization was to place in office the best-informed men among us. General Lew Wallace says that the best general is not the one who does the most fighting himself, but the one who surrounds himself with the largest number of the best-drilled soldiers. Many a pastor has failed because he tried to do everything in his church instead of selecting

qualified laymen who could have done many things better than he could do them. There are thirty-six men on the official Boards of the Abyssinian Church. A bank cashier, a police lieutenant, the three accountants and seven college graduates are among them. The majority of the remaining have a high school training or its equivalent. Unless there is something very important to be considered, the church has only one business meeting a year. It has empowered these thirty-six men to transact its business. You do not have to look far beyond these men to discover the secret of the church's success.

With the congregation fairly united and started on the road toward a model organization, we decided there was not enough room in 40th Street both for our church and the houses of prostitution. Those who did not yield to the Gospel during the thirty-night campaign had been reinforced by an army of newcomers, and they were more defiant than ever. These harlots would stand across the street on Sunday evenings in unbuttoned Mother Hubbards soliciting men as they left our service.

We called the ministers and a few laymen together and made an appeal to the police captain of the district. He referred us to the head of the Vice Squad, and the officer of the Vice Squad sent us to the Police Commissioner; there we were told to go to His Honor the Mayor, and Mayor Gaynor practically told us to go to hell. In the most abrupt and laconic manner he said to this group of clergymen, "Don't come down here

bothering me with any more protests about assignation houses until you can bring concrete evidence of such houses."

"What does Your Honor consider concrete evidence?"

"One of your men must pay a woman for the privilege of having intimate relationship with her, and you must bring a witness that she accepted the money. You are excused."

This was New York City until John Purroy Mitchel was elected mayor. He promised a house cleaning if elected and he kept his promise. All the clergymen, including myself, worked for his election, and the day after his inauguration the Police Captain of the 40th Street District sent for me. He said, "Doctor, the police force and the detectives of the Vice Squad are at your disposal. What do you want us to do?"

I said, "Give those who are conducting places of prostitution in our church block thirty days in which to cease their nefarious traffic or get out."

Several left in the designated time. Others remained and continued to operate. The latter group heaped every insult and indignity upon me as I passed them on my way to and from the church. My son Adam was a little chap and I often kept him at my side as a mascot. This proved very unfair to him. When the crusade was at its height and both men and women were being sent to jail, I was leading my mascot along the sidewalk. One of the women had filled a paper flour bag with waste from the human body and, standing on the roof,

she aimed it at our heads. It missed its mark but struck the sidewalk near Adam's feet and ruined his little white suit. If he has ever again served me or anyone as a mascot during a crusade, I can't recall it.

Within six months after Mayor Mitchel entered City Hall, every house of ill-repute in the church block had been closed. It is a parody on Christianity to inform my readers that the last woman carried out of that block to serve four months on Blackwell's Island for prostitution was a member of the Abyssinian Church and one of the loudest shouters of the Sunday Morning Praying Band. Her twelve-year-old daughter was taken with her. She had taught that child the vice of prostitution. The girl's funeral was one of the saddest I ever conducted, for at the age of fourteen she died from syphilis.

Following this successful cleanup in 40th Street, a member of the *New York Age* editorial staff said, "You ministers should now strike at social prostitution as carried on by church members in their homes and buffet flats. I attended a party last week where intoxicated women, prominent in society and church, sat opposite men with their feet on the tables smoking cigarettes. I will give you the addresses of a dozen buffet flats in Harlem, several of them being run by women of your church, providing you do not mention my name. You can investigate before you preach, and the *Age* will publish your sermon."

The investigation revealed more than had been told me. The next Sunday Dr. Reverdy C. Ransom, pastor

of Bethel A. M. E. Church, and I delivered a scathing tirade against female wickedness in high places. We did everything but call names. My description of the drunken party was so real that some of the participants swore I was there. Others declared that some of my members who were present had talked out of school and they called their names in anonymous letters to me. The *Age* published everything I said; it was like throwing a rock into a hornet's nest. One of my members who was running a buffet flat in 134th Street read the *Age* Friday afternoon and moved out that night. I have never seen her again. In one week I received more than twenty anonymous letters calling me every name which has not been printed in the dictionary. These letters tried to make me believe that someone would be waiting in every hallway to do me violence.

A postcard was sent through the mail saying, "You have just thirty days more to live in New York City." The writing was in red ink and the penmanship was that of a woman. One came every day for thirty days, each card reducing the number of days left for me to live in New York City. Only a psychiatrist can imagine how I felt the morning the last one of the thirty cards arrived stating, "You have just one more day to live in New York City." The writer of those cards was a psychologist. No attempt was made on my life, but my morale never came so near the collapsing point.

Two things restored my diminishing courage. First, the strong support and encouragement of the decent members of the Abyssinian Church which outnumbered

the other crowd ten to one, and next the sympathetic backing of the Negro press. During my long ministry, I have not known a more helpful ally than the Negro newspapers. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred I have found the race papers on the right side in a moral fight. The press has not only been with me in every righteous battle, but it has kept my work before the public. If I am well known all over the United States and Canada, it is not because I am brilliant but because the newspapers of both races have thought well of my work.

Owing to the kind and often flattering publicity given me by the press, I have not been able to accept one-fifth of the invitations extended me to lecture and conduct religious campaigns. In October, 1909, I accepted an invitation to conduct a city-wide evangelistic campaign in Indianapolis, Indiana. Every denomination and race in the city participated. The white and colored papers vied with each other in reporting the meetings. A writer on one of the white dailies was converted while reporting my sermon. The following is an account of the meetings gathered from these papers by the *Christian Banner:*

"The colored people of Indianapolis, Ind., closed a great union revival campaign last Friday night. Churches of all denominations, including Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterians and the Disciples of Christ, laid aside their denominational differences and came together in one great soul-saving effort. The old citi-

zens of both races testify that it was the largest and most helpful revival of religion ever witnessed in that part of the country among colored people. The meetings were held in Bethel A. M. E. Church, which has a seating capacity of one thousand and five hundred. After the first week from one thousand and three hundred to one thousand five hundred were present every evening, and the last two nights every available standing space was occupied. No one can tell how many people were saved during the fifteen days, because it was impossible to keep track of the folk as they accepted Jesus in every part of the house. But it is conservatively estimated that from four to five hundred were converted, and that every church in the city today is stronger spiritually because of the meeting.

"Rev. J. Henry Callis, the organizer of the movement, was ably assisted by the other pastors and many laymen. Among the laymen who were active in making the affair a success, none were more active than Mr. George Knox, the veteran editor of the "Freeman." He was present nearly every night, and saw that the evangelist was sent home in good style. Dr. Callis deserves great credit for the smooth way in which he conducted this great religious movement. Rev. A. Clayton Powell, pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church, New York City, did all the preaching, and made all the appeals. Mr. Thomas E. Taylor, the excellent Secretary of the Indianapolis Y. M. C. A., organized a great union choir and led in the singing. Mrs. Effie Penn Payne, of Cincinnati, Ohio, one of the most inspiring

Gospel singers of the Baptist denomination, melted the audience each evening with her solos.

"Four special services were held in the afternoon during the campaign. Wednesday, at three thirty o'clock, there was a meeting for children only. Fourteen hundred attended this meeting. Many of the teachers led their children directly from the schoolroom to the church auditorium, and hundreds of boys and girls from the grammar and high schools accepted Christ as their Saviour, and promised to lead a life of love. One thousand women were at the meeting for women only, held Thursday afternoon, and many of them professed conversion. Dr. Powell delivered a special address to teachers and other professional and business men and women of the city on Friday afternoon. Indianapolis has sixty colored teachers, and many of these were in sympathy with the movement and openly confessed that they were greatly helped by the meetings. The crowning meeting, however, in the whole series was the service for men only, held in the Jones Tabernacle, on Sunday afternoon.

"The 'Indianapolis Star' gives this description of the meeting:

' "An Awful Whirlwind' was the subject of a sermon which the Rev. Dr. A. Clayton Powell, an evangelist of New York City, preached at this season's first "Monster Meeting" of the colored Young Men's Christian Association in the Jones Tabernacle, Blackford and North Streets, yesterday afternoon.

'Records, in attendance and money raised, for the last several years were broken, and religious enthusiasm and fervor also reached high-water mark. Fifty-four men were converted, and more than a hundred promised to lead better lives.

' "What then?" the preacher asked in one part of his sermon. "You may say you are living happily, and easily, and plans for the future are bright, but what will you do, after all? Where will you spend eternity?

' "If you are not careful it will be in an awful whirlwind, my friends," he continued. "Sin starts as a gentle breeze and slowly and surely increases and ends in a cyclone of death and destruction. Be alert and on your guard, and heavenly rewards will follow.

' "The best part of our religion," the Rev. Mr. Powell added, "is the bright and hopeful side. No matter how low and degraded you may be, the saving power of Jesus Christ is able to rescue you."

'The preacher gave a number of illustrations to show what "religion" had done for others, and an enthusiastic chorus of "amens" and shouts and audible prayers almost drowned him at times. A handshaking rally followed, and officers of the association feel that the meeting was one of the best ever held. The Rev. Mr. Powell congratulated Indianapolis on having the largest colored Young Men's Christian Association in the country, and said he thought this year would be the brightest in its history.'

"The 'Indianapolis News,' one of the most influ-

ential dailies of the West, said many complimentary things about the revival and Dr. Powell. We clip the following:

'The union evangelical meetings being held at Bethel A. M. E. Church are attracting the largest crowds known in the history of the colored people of this city. More than one thousand women attended the special meeting held for women exclusively, Thursday afternoon. The Rev. A. Clayton Powell, who was brought from New York City to conduct the meetings, has proved an unusually strong speaker and appeals to people of all classes.

'Mr. Powell is not a sensational preacher, but appeals directly to the thought and conscience of the individual.'

"The 'Indianapolis Freeman' gathered some of the most helpful sayings from Rev. Powell's sermons, and the 'Banner' here reproduces them with the hope that every minister will put them in his scrap-book:

"The Church is no longer judged by its creeds and confessions, but by its deeds.

"You are holding this meeting not to get men into Heaven, but to get Heaven into men.

"I came to Indianapolis not to help you to keep men out of hell, but to help you keep hell out of men.

"There are not twelve people in any church in Indianapolis who really desire to see the world saved.

"The reason why many parents do not want their children saved is that they will have to stop carrying the beer can.

"One word of praise rightly bestowed on a woman while living is worth more than forty sermons delivered over her dead body.

"You cannot be a Christian without the love of Christ, and if you love Him you will become an active member of His church.

"I am afraid of the church member who goes around with his face as long as a fence rail and a basket of tribulations on his arm.

"The majority of men do not care a lollipop for our church doctrines, they are looking for practical translation of the Spirit of Jesus in everyday life of our members.

"No revival of religion is genuine that does not drive the Devil out of the heart, smash the idols in the home and elevate the citizenship of the community.

"If you will show me a dancing, card-playing, theatre-going Christian that has won a single soul to Jesus in ten years I will walk back to New York.

"An attempt to measure the influence of one woman is an attempt to measure the distance between the gates of perdition and the gates of eternal pearl.

"The professional and business men are leaders of the race, and no leadership can be permanent and help-

ful that is not surcharged with the principles taught by Jesus Christ and His church.

"In God's eyeview, any man who had rather die than lie, who had rather starve than steal, who had rather be right than rich, is a Saint in Caesar's Household."

The Indianapolis meeting is typical of similar meetings held in nearly all of the large colored centers from Toronto, Canada, to Los Angeles, California, and the comments of the press in Indianapolis are typical of the publicity and comments of the press in all places. For seven successive years I was invited to conduct union evangelistic meetings in Baltimore under the sponsorship of the Young Men's Christian Association. The files of the *Afro-American* show that the meetings and the speaker were always sympathetically and helpfully mentioned by its reporters and editorial writers. The first time I was invited to lecture in California, the *California Eagle*, which has been published for more than forty years in Los Angeles, honored me with a long editorial. A few lines are quoted:

"In appearance he is tall and of spare build and on ascending the rostrum to talk at once captivates the audience and commands their undivided attention from the commencement to the end of his discourse. Forcible and eloquent in language, unassuming in appearance, earnest and never tiring in his efforts in behalf of his race, he is doing yeoman's work for the colored man

and making for himself a fame more enduring than monuments of marble or tablets of burnished bronze."

After this I was invited to preach and lecture in California four times. To what extent the *Eagle* editorial influenced these invitations I do not know, but I know that each time I was welcomed on its front and editorial pages.

May I reverently make an addition to the Beatitudes of Jesus: "Blessed is that preacher who has the unbought friendship of the newspapers." There can be no greater influence in the world than that of pulpit and press working harmoniously together. If my career as a public speaker has been the success that people say, it is because I have always tried courageously to speak the truth and because the newspapers have gladly served at all times as a medium to convey this truth to an audience many times larger than could ever have been reached by the spoken word.

The contrary winds have ceased, and I am enjoying a sweet calm. Is it a lull that pressages a storm? We shall see in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

LAUNCHING OUT INTO THE DEEP

> Now, when He had left speaking,
> He said unto Simon, "Launch out into the
> deep and let down your nets for a draught."
>
> The Bible

IT was apparent as early as 1911 that Harlem would be the final destination of the Abyssinian Church. At the beginning of the twentieth century Rev. R. D. Wynn, one of the finest men and ministers the race had produced, had this dream while the church was in Waverly Place. He told it to the congregation which pronounced it a nightmare. Dr. Wynn was so sure that his dream was a vision from God that he ended his pastorate of sixteen years when the people failed to agree with him. During his pastorate the membership was increased from three hundred to one thousand, all debts paid and sixteen thousand dollars put in the bank toward the erection of a new church building.

The following year, 1902, Dr. C. S. Morris became pastor. Even his persuasive eloquence could not carry the people to Harlem, but it did get them to 40th

Street. Small favors thankfully received. That first year, while the members were still enthusiastic over the new broom, he swept nine thousand dollars out of their pockets, added it to the sixteen thousand dollars on hand and paid twenty-five thousand dollars on the building in the midtown section. The money from the sale of the Waverly Place property was used to purchase two apartments. As will be shown later, this proved the outstanding accomplishment in the six years' ministry of Dr. Morris. The resignation of Dr. Wynn and the forceful arguments of Dr. Morris started the congregation toward Harlem, but the members were still fishing too near shore. The great shoal of fish was four miles away, and other schools by the thousands were swimming in that direction. A quiet canvass of the leaders revealed that they were almost to a man opposed to going to Harlem.

I began a campaign of education which had to be conducted with the greatest diplomacy. I preached many times from the text, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught." "A Model Church" was the subject of this sermon which was delivered first in 1911, revised and repeated every year after that until 1923. In those early days I always stressed the fact that Jesus organized the church in Jerusalem because more people were there than in any other place in Palestine. The obvious implication was: go to Harlem where the majority of colored people are. I learned from conversation with the most influential members that it would have been easier to

lead the church to Harlem from Waverly Place than from 40th Street. It was still fresh in my mind that the beloved pastor who tried to lead them from Waverly Place lost his pulpit. The members now had a superstitious belief that the 40th Street property was a gold mine, and if they held it long enough it would yield them a million dollars. This belief was more deeply rooted in their religious consciousness than the Baptist articles of faith and exercised a greater influence on their church life than the salvation of Harlem.

In 1916, I announced at a business meeting of the church that we could get two hundred and forty thousand dollars for the property. A prominent layman arose and said, "The Pastor is trying to kill the goose which will lay us a golden egg. If we hold on to this property, we can get a million dollars for it." The audience shouted its approval. No one even made a motion to consider the offer. That night the church lost one hundred and fifty thousand dollars and the opportunity of rendering a larger service to humanity during the next seven years. Seven years later we were glad to accept one hundred and ninety thousand dollars, and at that time it cost one hundred thousand dollars more to build. The next few years significant events came thick and fast. Some of them changed the psychology of the race, and the world and all of them changed the psychology of the Abyssinian Church.

The United States entered the World War. Real estate values collapsed in the 40th Street district and started climbing heavenward with the skyscrapers

along 59th Street and Central Park. The center of New York City shifted from Times Square to Columbus Circle. Another tremendous event was the southern migration. It is estimated that three hundred and fifty thousand Negroes migrated from the south to the north in one year. At least one hundred thousand of these stopped in New York City, the majority in Harlem. There was hardly a member in Abyssinian Church who could not count one or more relatives among the new arrivals.

The invasion of Harlem by this army of Negroes scared the white people almost to death. They literally ran in every direction from the most beautiful section of Manhattan, leaving behind them some of the finest homes in the city. Real estate values sank to an unbelievable figure. To illustrate: I bought a limestone front house trimmed inside with mahogany for six thousand dollars. The owner admitted that it had cost her seventeen thousand five hundred dollars to build it. Six years later when people regained their sanity, I sold it for fifteen thousand five hundred dollars. I urgently advised colored people to buy that year. Had my counsel been heeded, they would now own Harlem.

The coming of Marcus Garvey to Harlem in 1914 was more significant to the Negro than the World War, the southern exodus and the fluctuation of property values up- and downtown. Garvey, with his Black United States, Black President and Vice-President, Black Cabinet, Black Congress, Black Army with Black Generals, Black Cross Nurses, Black *Negro World*,

Black Star Line and a Black Religion with a Black God had awakened a race consciouness that made Harlem felt around the world. The cotton picker of Alabama, bending over his basket, and the poor ignorant Negro of the Mississippi Delta, crushed beneath a load of prejudice, lifted their heads and said, "Let's go to Harlem to see this Black Moses."

Harlem became the symbol of liberty and the Promised Land to Negroes everywhere. During the reign of Garvey there were two places in America—the Federation of the forty-eight states and Harlem, and two million Negroes thought that Harlem was both of them. I am not writing a brief for Marcus Garvey, but it is recording the truth, and perhaps for the first time, to say that he is the only man that ever made Negroes who are not black ashamed of their color.

The foregoing events, plus the moving uptown of St. Phillips P. E. and the Bethel A. M. E. churches, made Abyssinia Harlem-minded. To encourage this disposition we held meetings one Sunday afternoon in each month in Harlem. Mr. Gibb Young, who was an outstanding man in the sporting world, not only donated the use of Young's Casino, but he and Mrs. Young attended all the services and never gave less than five dollars in the offering. I preached against everything that went on in his Casino. Such sermons as "Little Foxes" and "Watch Your Step," which deal with all kinds of wickedness, were featured in those services. Mr. Young always had his bar closed during

these services, and he and I are good friends to this day.

In the spring of the next year, 1920, we purchased six lots in West 138th Street with a frontage of 150 feet. That summer and the next, evangelistic tent meetings were held on them. Harlem had never seen anything so religiously refreshing. The colored and white manifested their spiritual and financial interest. About a thousand people were added to the church, giving us a membership of about four thousand. For two years I had visited every publishing house in New York City and bought every book and tract they had on tithing and stewardship. About twice a month during those years I preached on these two subjects. I never did so much plagiarizing in all my life, but I did not retain any of the stolen goods. I gave them all to the people.

On Easter Sunday, 1920, we distributed cards to the congregation, asking the members and friends to give, in addition to the current expense offering, one-tenth of their earned income toward the building of a church and community house. Six hundred persons signed the cards on that day and about four hundred more later. By May 1, 1921, the tithing money amounted to thirty-three thousand two hundred and seventy dollars, and the regular Sunday offerings had increased one hundred per cent.

Charles Bolton and Son had drawn a plan for a great Gothic and Tudor structure and a picture of it was hanging in the church. The architects figured at that time that the church could be built and furnished for

two hundred thousand dollars. This was frightful enough, for up to that year of our Lord one hundred thousand dollars was the limit for a Negro church building. Only the Union Baptist Church of Philadelphia had exceeded this limit.

In the early spring of 1921, both labor and material went skyrocketing. Stonemasons and bricklayers were getting fourteen dollars a day and riding to work in Packard cars, while the unskilled workers drawing seven dollars a day came on behind in Fords. The architects confidentially told the Committee that if we built according to plans and specifications, we would be lucky to get out of it for three hundred thousand dollars. This confidential information leaked out, and a few evil emissaries sold it like gold bricks to the audience.

The devil never did a better job. These pessimists said that we were saddling a debt on the church that our children's children would not be able to wipe out. One of these friendly enemies published this dicouraging gossip in a local paper, accusing the pastor of crucifying the members to make a big name for himself. A prominent real estate broker said in a public address that the pastor should be sent to the penitentiary.

This discouraging propaganda had its effect upon the congregation in general and upon the tithers in particular. More than half of the one thousand tithers stopped giving, and many of them said they would not give any more until they saw the buildings going up and were reliably informed of their cost. For this rea-

son the majority urged us to begin the work of construction at once. The Committee did not think this was wise or that it was even wise to affirm or deny the rumors that we would be forced to spend at least three hundred thousand dollars. In the *Church Annual*, May, 1921, we published this explanation and apology:

"The construction of our new church building on 138th Street lots has been delayed because of the failure to sell our 40th Street property, the high cost of labor and material and the extortionate charges of the money lenders. We hope, however, to break ground in September at the close of our tent meetings. In addition to the regular offerings, tithing money for the new church averaged two thousand and five hundred dollars a month during the past year. This amount would have been doubled had all the members followed the Lord's plan for giving."

Neither this statement nor the inspiring tent meetings that summer could revive the waning interest in the Harlem building project. Abyssinians were willing to go to the promised land but they were not disposed to pay three hundred thousand dollars for the privilege of picking its flowers and its fruits. September, October and November brought no assurance whatever that the people were going to help build a church edifice. They were never more united or seemingly in love with me, but they were simply indifferent to my costly Harlem dream. I had fought poverty and ignorance, conquered

enemies, won moral victories, stemmed fierce tides of opposition and stood erect against contrary winds, but I had never learned to overcome indifference, the most benumbing of all foes.

My printed sermons and lectures were selling like hot cakes at that time. I had realized more than twelve hundred dollars from "Watch Your Step" and "The Valley of Dry Bones," and they and a dozen other pamphlets were still in great demand. One thousand had just been sold on a recent trip to St. Louis. I had enough speaking engagements to keep me busy for three years.

When I hinted to the church officers that if the congregation did not manifest more interest in the building program I would resign and devote myself to this work, they answered me with a doubtful laugh. On the second Sunday in December, 1921, without the knowledge of anyone except my faithful friend and secretary, Miss Dorothy DeAncy, I read my resignation. Hon. Lester Walton, then dramatic editor of the *New York Age* and special correspondent of the *New York World,* and now Minister to Liberia, described what happened far better than I can, in the December 17th issue of the *Age*. He said:

"If an earthquake had shaken Manhattan last Sunday, it would not have surprised the congregation of the Abyssinian Baptist Church more than did the reading of Rev. A. Clayton Powell's resignation as pastor at the close of the morning service. The *Age* learns

from authoritative sources that Dr. Powell has been talking with his officers and other leading members of the church for the past year about resigning from the pastorate and devoting the remainder of his life to evangelistic work, the lecture platform, and the publishing of sermons; but no one, not even Mrs. Powell, expected him to present it last Sunday.

"Before Dr. Powell could take his seat, Nelson Dixon, chairman of the trustee board, moved that the congregation refuse to accept the pastor's resignation. This was seconded by the chorister, John H. Page, chairman of the board of deacons, William H. Taylor and by at least three hundred members of the congregation. The motion was unanimously opposed by a rising vote. Every available space in the church was occupied and the visitors were as strong in their protest against the pastor severing his relations with the church as were the members.

"Dr. Powell has been pastor of the church for thirteen years and the congregation was never more prosperous and harmonious than now. Plans and specifications have been prepared for the erection of one of the finest and largest churches in the country, on lots recently purchased in Harlem. Fifteen thousand dollars has been paid on these lots and about fifty thousand dollars is on hand with which to begin the construction of the new edifice. More than one thousand and two hundred members have been added to the church in the past two years and the offerings run from three hundred to five hundred dollars a Sunday.

"When approached by an *Age* representative, Dr. Powell declined to furnish a copy of his letter to the church for publication, but said he was being besieged by all classes of people, both in and out of the church, to withdraw his resignation.

'I do not wish,' said he, 'to discuss the affair further until I have reached a decision and conveyed that decision to my officers and church. I will say, however, that if this popular protest together with the unanimous vote of my church, did not weigh heavily upon my mind and make me think seriously of reconsidering the step taken last Sunday morning, I would be both ungrateful and unhuman.' "

I did not give Mr. Walton a copy of my resignation because the officers literally forced me to give them the original when I read it Sunday morning and made me promise solemnly that I would burn the copy of it when I reached home. This is the only thing I can remember saying in that resignation:

"I am leaving your church to devote myself to evangelistic campaigns, the delivering of lectures and the publishing of sermons because you do not believe in progressive and aggressive leadership."

They convinced me in the next few days that I had both misrepresented and slandered them. That week the church officers met, ate up seventeen dollars' worth of food and pledged seventeen thousand dollars to the

building fund. Within two weeks the delinquent tithers had renewed their pledges and a thousand others had promised to give ten per cent of their earnings.

Fifteen days after the resignation, the 40th Street property was sold for one hundred and ninety thousand dollars and the bargain was bound with twenty thousand dollars. After paying off the mortgage and the broker, we had about one hundred thousand dollars left to be added to the building fund. On that Watch Meeting night in 1921, the people went wild when Mr. Page led them in singing, "I Am Going Through." Never did a church go through more magnificently. Ninety-five per cent of the people paid their pledges, giving seventy-two thousand dollars in one year. This set a new record in church giving.

On April 9, 1922, the anniversary of General Lee's surrender at Appomattox, ground was broken and the work of construction was begun. The buildings are Gothic and Tudor in design and constructed of New York bluestone. The front and rear windows are of European art glass and are among the largest and most beautiful in the United States. The side windows are of American art glass. All windows carry sacred designs and were donated either by groups or individuals.

The church has an amphitheatre auditorium with an Italian marble pulpit and seating capacity of approximately two thousand. The lecture room seats one thousand, and there are fourteen other rooms in the buildings for accommodation of classes, clubs and committees. The community house has a gymnasium,

shower baths, reading rooms, a model apartment, rooms for teaching cooking, sewing and nursing, a model dining room and a roof garden. The cost of construction and furnishing were estimated to run beyond three hundred thousand dollars.

The very audacity of the undertaking started tongues wagging and newspapers writing. The *New York World* led the white papers in publishing encouraging articles. The *Richmond Planet* on April 8, 1922, carried a splendid editorial written by John Mitchell. It said in part:

"If the colored people of New York will rally and pay this amount for a new church edifice, it will be an eye opener for colored people in the other parts of the country. . . . When colored folks have the nerve to risk such an undertaking, they are ready to soar in the realm of finance. The Rev. Dr. A. C. Powell is one of the most popular Divines in the country."

On the first Sunday in July, less than three months after breaking ground, the cornerstone was laid. People were present from all the cities between Boston and Washington to witness the ceremonies. No tongue can describe the crowds on streets, vacant lots and roofs of nearby houses which was variously estimated from twenty-five thousand to fifty thousand. Mr. Joseph Gilbert, manager of the Religious Department of the *New York American* was present and gives perhaps the best account to be found in any paper. He said in part:

"Work on what will be the largest Baptist Church in the country is now under way on 138th Street between 7th and Lenox Avenues. The cornerstone of the new Abyssinian Baptist Church was laid amid appropriate ceremonies last Sunday afternoon. The building when completed will cost three hundred thousand dollars. Thousands of persons who at times blocked traffic witnessed the cornerstone laying exercises. The ceremonies were in charge of the Negro Masonic Lodge of the State of New York of which David W. Parker is Grand Master. The big crowd watched in hushed silence the sacred and impressive rites of the Masonic Order as the stone was laid.

"Two services, one Masonic and one religious, were held in the Metropolitan Baptist Church on 128th Street and 7th Ave. It was four o'clock when the crowd left this church, falling into a body behind the Jenkins Orphan Band, and marched to the site of the new church. According to the plans the new church will be completed in January of next year."

The buildings were not ready for occupancy in January, as we had been promised, because we struck quicksand at the east end of the lots where the community house now stands, and to keep that part of the building from sinking, we were forced to lay a concrete footing the whole length of the eastern wall at great extra cost of time and money. Even the tides of a million years ago were against us. Perhaps it was during or before the Ice Age that the swift tides of the

Atlantic Ocean, driven by furious winds, lashed the rocks upon which the church edifice stands and left great deposits of sand which made it necessary for us to spend twelve thousand dollars laying a safe foundation upon which a part of the community house is resting. Not only sand, but sea shells found here in the sand and in the cleft of the rocks show that this part of Manhattan was once under the Atlantic Ocean.

We were further delayed by the scarcity of labor. Miller-Reed Company, the builders, had promised us when the contract was awarded that they would employ all the competent colored help they could find. During the first two months only three colored men, including the night watchman, were on their payroll. When we called Mr. Miller's attention to his promise he said, "I have employed all the colored and white qualified workers I could find. I now need ten more men very badly. Will your committee find them? I am paying fourteen dollars a day for skilled workers and seven dollars for unskilled."

We combed New York for two weeks and found three colored masons and two hod carriers. Two of the masons and both helpers left after working a week and at the end of two weeks the third mason went south to bury his mother-in-law and he did not return until the church walls were completed. Plenty of colored men stood around criticizing us for the way we were building the church, but only two could be found who helped us build it from start to finish.

This experience, followed by similar incidents, thor-

oughly convinced me that Dr. Booker T. Washington's theory of industrial education for the majority of Negroes is correct. Sometime later I was asked to find seven Negro carpenters. I advertised for them at all the Sunday services, asking each person in the audience to help me find them by sending some grapevine telegrams during the week. The only response to this effort came three weeks later when a man telephoned saying, "I have just arrived from Tuskegee and I hear that you want some carpenters."

I announced a little later from the same pulpit that Virginia Seminary and College, Lynchburg, Virginia, wanted two teachers. "They must possess a Master's degree, preferably from a northern college; the salary is fifty dollars a month with room, board and laundry." Before the end of the organ postlude nineteen had applied for the position and six more applied before the sun went down. There is something almost criminally wrong with an educational system that dumps twenty-four M.A.'s in New York to starve to death and only one carpenter and three masons who can demand from ten dollars to fourteen dollars per day. At the very first Tuskegee Founders Day exercises held in the Abyssinian Church, I most humbly apologized for all the criticism I ever made of Booker T. Washington's philosophy and theory of education.

Dr. R. R. Moton, the distinguished inheritor of the policy and philosophy of the greatest Negro produced in America, was the first man to be invited to speak at the dedication of the Abyssinian Church and Com-

munity House. These exercises began May 20, and terminated June 17, 1923, with appropriate dedicatorial ceremonies. Noted people from all races and denominations took part. It was a new epoch in the history of Negro church building and financing. The total cost of the buildings and furnishings amounted to three hundred thirty-four thousand, eight hundred eighty-one dollars and eighty-six cents. Of this amount all had been paid but sixty thousand dollars. The Dry Dock Savings Bank took a mortgage on the buildings for this sixty thousand dollars giving us twelve years to pay the principal at the rate of five thousand dollars a year. We launched at once a social and religious education program.

Mr. Horatio S. Hill who earned his Master's degree that year at Yale University, majoring in religious education, was made Director of the Community House, Mr. T. Lloyd Hickman was Assistant Director and Physical Instructor. His salary was paid by the New York Baptist City Mission Society. Mrs. Alberta Kline was Director of Girls Work and Mr. Daniel Taylor headed the Boys Department. The salaries of the last two named workers were paid by the New York City Mission Society. The New York Chapter of the American Red Cross Society financed a First Aid Nurse Training School with Mrs. Winfield in charge.

We had the first adequate community house or recreational center in the most congested Negro city in the world. The program from the beginning made a tremendous appeal to the imagination and pocketbooks

of all races and faiths. All spaces in the buildings were flooded with people seven days of the week and the church treasury was overflowing with contributions. It was the first time in my long ministerial career that I enjoyed a complete financial rest. The pastor and trustees pushed buttons and the money flowed.

The greatest blessing connected with the erection of the church buildings is that we had a building committee which could not be bought or bribed. We made up our minds from the very start that every cent passing through our hands should be honestly accounted for, that each one of us would live above the poisonous breath of scandal which is usually found even upon those directing church building enterprises. This honesty of purpose was religiously maintained despite the fact that one member of the Committee was offered fifteen thousand dollars by a builder if he would influence the Committee to award him the contract. The minute any contractor suggested a bribe or a present—and this was done more than once—he was completely eliminated from further consideration.

The names of this Committee should be placed in the church on a bronze tablet. Nelson E. Dixon, Chairman, W. C. Cole, Secretary and W. H. Marlowe, Treasurer, should head the list. These three not only handled the money, but they, with the pastor, were the buffer men of the Committee. I doubt if any one of them slept eight consecutive hours in two years. Had it not been for them, the pastor could not have gone through with the greatest undertaking that, up to that

time, had challenged the Negro's honesty and efficiency. How splendidly they met this challenge Haskins and Sells will tell you:

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

September 1, 1919 to April 30, 1924

Balance Sept. 1, 1919	$18,192.41
Total Receipts	493,853.25
Total	$512,045.66
Disbursements	500,627.90
Balance on hand April 30, 1924	$11,417.76

Dear Sirs:

Pursuant to engagement we have audited the books and records of the Abyssinian Baptist Church and Community House for the purpose of verifying the cash receipts and disbursements for the period from September 1, 1919 to April 30, 1924 and we certify that as shown by the books the accompanying statement prepared by your Secretary is correct.

Yours truly,
Haskins & Sells, C. P. A.
37 W. 39 St., New York, N. Y.

This noted firm of certified public accountants is still financially responsible for this statement. For three men to handle five hundred twelve thousand forty-five dollars and sixty-six cents without losing a red copper has no parallel in Negro church history.

Russell Sage says that a vacation is not a cessation from work, but a change of occupation. For three years I had not ceased working. My occupation was new and underwent changes every week. During that time I had

not consulted a physician. I was too busy steering the old fishing boat out into the deep to think of myself. The officers said to me, "You have been bucking the tide long enough. Now you must ride the tides."

Chapter 6

TIDES AND CLIMES

Give me a sense of humor, Lord;
Give me grace to see a joke;
To get some happiness from life,
And pass it on to other folk.

Anonymous

WHEN I was informed that the members of the Abyssinian Church were planning to give me a three months' trip abroad as an expression of their appreciation of my leadership, my first reaction was not that of joy or even gratitude, but of tremendous responsibility. I said to myself: "If these loyal people are going to spend three thousand dollars on me, I must see that they get every dollar back in information and increased efficiency."

To this end three months were spent mapping the tour and familiarizing myself with the high spots along the way. With passports in my pocket, books on travel in my luggage and a well-planned itinerary in my head, I stepped aboard the S.S. *Reliance* of the Hamburg American Line on August 19, 1924, for a fourteen thousand mile journey with Dr. W. P. Hayes, a warm personal friend and a delightful traveling companion.

This journey carried us* into three continents, through eight countries and across five seas.

Amid the blowing of whistles, ringing of bells and the snowstorm of a thousand handkerchiefs our ship freed itself from the dock, steamed down the Hudson and out on the bosom of the great Atlantic with a saucy tug at its side. At Sandy Hook the harbor pilot left our ship with its captain and compass to battle the winds and the waves for three thousand six hundred miles. To the delight of all on board there were neither wind nor waves to battle. I had previously crossed the ocean twice, but this was the only crossing on which I did not see a seasick passenger. There was hardly a ripple on the ocean, the English Channel or the North Sea.

We arrived in Hamburg, Germany, on August 29. Hamburg is the greatest seaport town on earth and ranks as the first city in commercial importance on the other side of the ocean. More than a thousand vessels enter and leave its harbor every month. We were not on German soil thirty minutes before we were impressed with the economic and mental efficiency of its people. Germany seemed less affected by the World War than any country we visited except Switzerland. Despite the loss of territory and of two million men during the war, Germany still had an area of one hundred and seventy-two thousand square miles and a population of sixty million. It had more large cities

* Wherever the plural personal pronoun appears in this chapter, it includes Dr. W. P. Hayes and is used with his approval.

and public buildings and palaces than any other country in the world. Forty-five of its cities have more than one hundred thousand inhabitants each, and two hundred of them have more than twenty thousand each.

Since we were there chiefly to study social, economic and religious conditions, most of our time was spent in the large cities. We therefore turned our backs on Hamburg with its eight hundred thousand inhabitants and went to Berlin with its four million souls—at least they had souls in 1924. Berlin is the capital but it is better known as the City of Cathedrals and Universities. Before the coming of Adolf Hitler it was the greatest modern education and art center in the world. I can recall the time when students who had learned all they could in other universities went to the University of Berlin to learn more. During our stay in Berlin, we did not meet an ignorant person. You could find more culture among the servants in a Berlin hotel than you could find on a college campus in America. A hotel porter was as refined as the average American school teacher, and a hotel maid exhibited as much culture as the wives of bank presidents in this country. After benediction in the majority of American churches you could hear people talking loud enough to be heard in all parts of the auditorium. Dr. Hayes and I worshiped at the Kaiser's church on Sunday. Three thousand were present and when they were dismissed, we could not hear what anyone was saying six feet from us. All were talking, but their voices were suppressed to a semi-

whisper. Such culture can only come from the severest mental discipline.

Our German guide told us that the finest cathedral in the world was at Cologne and that the best beer in the world was at Munich. Our program did not permit us to go to both places, so we went to Cologne. While Cologne had only six hundred thousand inhabitants, from the standpoint of area it is the largest city in Germany, covering as it does twenty-seven thousand two hundred acres. Its history dates back to Emperor Claudius of Rome. His wife Agrippina, the mother of Nero, was born here. All around the city may still be seen the ruins of towers and walls built by Claudius about the time Jesus lived on earth.

Our guide might have been incorrect in saying it was the finest cathedral in the world, but it certainly is the most interesting object in Cologne, and most of our time was spent there. The critics call it the most magnificent Gothic pile in the world. It is the highest church building on earth. Two of its spires rise to a height of five hundred and twelve feet. The foundation stone of the present cathedral was laid 1248 A.D. and the cathedral was dedicated October 1, 1880, by Kaiser Wilhelm I. Thus six hundred and twenty-three years were spent in its erection.

On the morning of September 5, we steamed up the Rhine on the *Bismarck* from Cologne to Mainz, a distance of one hundred and eleven miles. The Rhine rises among the seven mountains of the Alpine Chain and empties into the North Sea, draining an area of

about seventy-five thousand square miles or about one-half of Germany. The river and the country through which it flows are indescribable. It is one of the greatest industrial centers on earth. Its grapes and wines cannot be excelled. Upon its beautiful banks, with lofty craigs and towering hills, stand mansions, palaces and castles—many of them built before Christ was born. Some of the greatest events of the world occurred here. Some of the greatest men of history lived here. Some of the most far-reaching battles of time were fought here. From here thousands of knights in the Middle Ages left for the Holy Land to die defending the Holy Sepulchre of the Son of God against the marauding Turks and Arabs. For beauty the Rhine is in a class by itself. In comparison, the Hudson and most other rivers are nothing but muddy streams. For wealth of history only the Jordan and the Nile are its competitors. There is hardly a man of letters who has not eulogized the Rhine. It is a favorite resort of scholars, poets and writers of fiction. Longfellow echoes the sentiment of everyone who has had the great privilege of visiting the Rhine country when he says:

> Oh the pride of the German heart is the noble river
> And right it is;
> For all the rivers of this beautiful earth there is none so beautiful as this.

I never expect to see a more beautiful country than the Rhineland until I stand in the sweet fields of Eden. I never expect to look upon a more beautiful river

until I behold the crystal river bursting from under the Great White Throne of God.

After spending a night at Mainz we went to Frankfort and from there to Freiberg with its great university and Gothic church dating back to the twelfth century, and then through the Black Forest, considered the most wonderful, charming and historic forest of the world. Our last stop was at Basel, Switzerland, the home of Erasmus, the mighty scholar and contemporary of Martin Luther. As I sat that night in my hotel room looking pensively back over the swing I had just made through the country of the most economical and mentally efficient people I had ever met, I repeatedly asked myself this question: "Will Luther or Lucifer triumph in Germany?" There are two great spirits contending for supremacy in Germany—the spirit of might and the spirit of right. This contention is becoming fiercer every day. I felt it in the people's conversations, read it in their daily papers and saw it, above all, in their art. If you want to know the ideals and destinations of any people, study their art.

It is impossible to separate Luther and Lucifer in the study of German art. The great Sans Souci Palace in Wilt Park at Potsdam contains one of the finest collections of art in Germany. In the dining room of that palace one will see the "Bath of Bath-sheba" and other obscene pictures, calculated to arouse the baser passions, side by side with those of angels and holy men, Christ and saints, military heroes and scenes of violence. They are mixed and mingled in such a way

that no one can tell which have the more prominent place. The Avenue of Victory in Berlin is lined for its whole length on both sides with statues representing the Hohenzollerns and all the mighty military giants of German history for five hundred years. These carved figures are trying to express the spirit of Christianity and the spirit of military might. For instance, "Albert the Bear" has a sword in one hand and the cross of Christ in the other. Germany has not learned that one or the other must dominate.

While we were standing at the end of this avenue looking at its wilderness of white marble statues glorifying war, might and murder, a company of German soldiers marched toward us. An old German woman who was selling postcards remarked, "They are nothing to be proud of." This is the attitude which Germany and the world must take if this demon which threatens to destroy civilization is to be driven from the face of the earth.

When the old woman made that remark to us we were standing under the shadow of the Victory Monument. It is the most wonderful thing of its kind to be seen anywhere. It is at least a hundred and fifty feet high and around its colossal body are three belts of cannons. These represent Germany's victory over Denmark in 1864, Germany's victory over Austria in 1866 and Germany's victory over France in 1870. Atop this monument, which stands for blood, cruelty and the munitions of war, is a great angel with outstretched wings of gold. This is Germany's idea of the religion

of the lowly Nazarene. Between Victory Monument and the Reichstag building is the famous statue of Bismarck, the man of blood and iron who founded and welded the German Empire. Grouped about this statue are figures representing the marvelous progress and power of this wonderful people. First, a little boy being pulled out of the marshes of semibarbarism; second, a man standing on the body of a live lion; third, a man carrying the world on his back; fourth, a woman sitting on the Sphinx solving the riddle of the universe.

Everywhere we see bronze and marble statues and great paintings portraying men choking panthers, killing wild bulls, fighting great snakes, and taming wild horses. Both inside and out of the church a premium is placed upon physical and mental prowess. Over the gorgeous pulpit of the great Gothic church of the Kaiser in Berlin is the German coat of arms with three eagles and the cross of Christ on its top. On one side of the church are the statues of John Calvin and a German war lord; on the other side are the statues of Martin Luther, the Apostle of Salvation by grace, and Albert the Bear with a sword buckled about his waist and a war helmet in his hands.

It is hard to tell which is uppermost in the minds of German artists: grace or war glory. It looks more like "Me and God" than "God and me." The future of the great German Empire of Frederick the Great and Otto Leopold Bismarck depends upon whether the religion of militarism or the religion of Christ will prevail. If Germany will smash its victory monuments,

lay down its military books, study war no more and follow Luther, it will save itself and the world. If it follows Lucifer, he will drag it to hell, and this time he will not carry one-third of heaven but the whole civilized world with him.

With these disturbing thoughts in my mind we left Germany for Lucerne, Switzerland, on the fastest train on which I ever rode. I had the feeling not only that I was leaving Germany forever but that I was fleeing from her wrath to come. To go from Germany to Switzerland is like going from a rising storm to a sweet calm and a beautiful sunshine.

Switzerland is one of the smallest, yet one of the most beautiful countries in the world. It has an area of about sixteen thousand square miles and a population of about four million. It is bounded by Austria, Germany, France and Italy. While the bloodiest war in history raged about Switzerland for four years, it remained as quiet in its tranquillity as the center of an awful cyclone.

The men of Switzerland did not keep out of war because they were cowards, but because they had too much good sense to fight. It requires more moral courage to avoid a fight than it does to engage in one. The Swiss people have been noted for their bravery from the legendary days of William Tell who was commanded by Gessler, the Austrian tyrant, to shoot an apple off his son's head. This he succeeded in doing and then finally killed Gessler and freed his country from Austrian oppression. Thorwaldsen was so im-

pressed with the bravery of the Swiss Guards in their defense of the Tuileries during the days of Louis XVI that he immortalized it in the "Lion of Lucerne." This lion is carved out of one solid piece of stone twenty-seven feet long, lying upon a broken shield with a wound in its side.

Switzerland is best known to the world as a tourist center. It attracts more visitors than any other country on earth. This is because it has the most varied climate, the most charming lakes and tumbling cascades and the most majestic mountain range to be found on earth. The main chain of the Alps runs through Switzerland. Its peaks vary from Mt. Pilatus, which is seven thousand feet high, to Mt. Blanc which pushes its snowy white nose nearly sixteen thousand feet into the dark blue skies.

We went to Lucerne because of its most interesting glacier garden, its most famous chain of mountains. If one can take a sail over the winding Lake of Lucerne without being hypnotized by its ravishing beauty and its historic memories, he needs to be congratulated on his incurable stupidity. It was two o'clock one brilliant afternoon, when the sunshine looked like refined gold and the sky like indigo, that we stood on the deck of a beautiful sight-seeing boat for a two hours' sail past the Chapel of William Tell.

I stood because I was too excited to sit down. That afternoon I felt the full force of the Negro spiritual, "I Can't Sit Down, I Won't Sit Down, I Just Got to Heaven and I Won't Sit Down." The lake was so

placid and crystal-like that it cried aloud as the prow of our boat split it open. On its banks were flowers, fruits and ferns of every variety. As we sailed along the splash of the boat wheel caused birds whose plumage vied in color and beauty with the flowers and foliage to fly away to more distant refuge. The Alps, like huge animals, cooled their ponderous feet in the enchanting water of the Lake and then stretched out and away until their humped backs were blanketed with snow. Here we were, riding on a lake as beautiful as a sea of glass, surrounded by the most wonderful vegetation and looking up at the eternally snow-capped Alpine peaks flashing like diamonds in the sunlight.

We got another charming view of the Lake the morning our train left Lucerne to cross the Alps. This train was pulled by two engines and spent hours going around and higher and higher until the Lake looked like a great shining sheet of silver, thousands of feet below. On and on we went until we found ourselves above the clouds and in a region of perpetual snow and winter. Here we remembered that two hundred years before Christ, Hannibal, the colored general of Carthage, lost thousands of men crossing these mountains to harass and conquer Italy, and that two thousand years later the mighty Napoleon led his suffering but invincible legions across these snow-clad heights to invade and conquer the same territory.

Away up there with the clouds boiling beneath our feet our train dashed into the St. Gotthard tunnel and in twenty-five minutes we had passed through the long-

est tunnel ever bored and blasted by man. Our train is now gliding down the slopes of the Italian Alps towards the beautiful Lake of Como amid some of the most majestic scenery in creation. The passengers cried, "Italia! Italia!" Yes, we were in Italy which begins on the summit of the Alps and stretches for seven hundred miles southward, rich with oranges, figs, dates, olives, vineyards, flowers, lakes, rivers and mountains, until at Brindisi it sticks its nose into the blue waters of the Adriatic Sea.

Our first stop was at Milan. We found ourselves in the midst of a civilization and a language different from anything we had ever witnessed. In some other languages one can often judge the meaning by the sound, but in the Italian language there is absolutely no relation between sound and sense. For instance, "Vecchio" means bridge; "albergo" means hotel; "coco-fresco" is lemonade and "polo" is chicken. We had learned how to ask for chicken, but we had not learned the Italian numerals, and so we walked into a restaurant, held up two fingers and said, "Polo." After an hour's wait, the waiter brought us two whole chickens cooked.

The monetary unit of Italy is the lira, which in 1924 was worth about five cents in our money. The plural of this word is lire. I had learned the singular but not the plural, so I walked into an American Express Company office with great gusto, threw down my travelers' check and said, "Give me four hundred and fifty liars." The agent laughed and corrected me, but

after remaining thirty days in Italy, I discovered I had made only a very slight mistake in asking for "liars."

The most interesting place in Milan is its famous cathedral, founded by Visconti, Duke of Milan, in 1386 at a cost of more than fifty million dollars and dedicated to the memory of Our Lady of Peace. It is a mixture of German Gothic, French, Moorish and Roman architecture. There is no uniformity in the colossal supporting columns. They look like the trees from a Druid forest—which they represent. It is the sixth largest church in the world, accommodating thirty thousand worshipers. The three windows back of the choir are the largest and most costly windows on earth. They portray the history of the Old Testament, the Apocrypha and the New Testament. The figure of Christ in the one portraying the history of the New Testament is so real that it looks like a column of fire, and beneath it is written, "The Light of the World."

This cathedral is a veritable treasure house of painted and sculptured art. It is not only a cathedral of mammoth size and fine art but of historical events. After the famous battle of Marengo, June, 1800, while the conquering French army watched on the outside, Napoleon strode down the main aisle to the altar and instead of bowing before the Cardinal he snatched the diadem from his hands and crowned himself King of Italy. During the World War, when the black eagle of despair hovered over all Europe and millions of hearts were crushed and bleeding, twenty-five thousand soldiers marched in here with knapsacks on their backs

and guns on their shoulders, fell on their knees and cried to the God of battle for help while the Archbishop of Milan with outstretched arms and tears flowing down his cheeks implored upon them the blessings of Almighty God.

Because of the length of our journey and the many interesting things to be seen, I am just touching the high spots as we move on to the Eternal City. Our next stop is at Florence which looks like Paradise. It lies in the beautiful valley of the Arno. It is called the fairest city on earth, but the word Florence literally means a city of flowers. It lived up to its reputation, for we not only saw flowers on every table of the spacious dining room of the Albergo Bagolonia, where we stayed, but flowers everywhere. The whole city looked and smelt like a flower garden. I can readily see why it has produced such artists, poets, writers, and scientists as Dante, Galileo, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and Andrea del Sarto. I can readily understand why it is called the artistic and intellectual center of Italy, and why for centuries it has attracted people of letters and art from all parts of the world. I can see without any stretch of the imagination why Florence is inexpressibly rich in historical records and relics.

Two cities have led the world in arts and letters: Athens and Florence. Athens is now a marble wilderness. Her glorious intellectuality and artistic beauty is a faded flower, but Florence is a city of flowers and holds the lovers of art and literature as no other spot on earth. Everywhere you turn there are statues,

monuments and pictures of art. Every church or public building is a center of art. The bronze doors of the church of John the Baptist, executed by Lorenzo Ghiberti are considered the finest pieces of sculptured art in the world. Michelangelo said they are worthy to be called the gates of paradise.

The art galleries of Florence are too numerous to mention. The Uffizi Gallery is not only the largest of these, but it is said to contain the most wonderful collection of pictures and statuary in the world. Whether this is true, I do not know, for every town in Italy claims to have the largest gallery and the finest church. On our way to the Uffizi Gallery we passed the house in which Dante was born, the church in which he was married and the spot on which Savonarola was burned in 1498 for his faith in Christ.

I saw so much art in the Uffizi Gallery that I could not sleep that night. Every time I closed my eyes I would see Michelangelo's statue of David going by, the "Martyrdom of St. Sebastian," the "Annunciation" by Vinci, saints, angels, heroes. At last "Springtime" and the "Birth of Venus" by Botticelli, which are among the very finest paintings in the world, appeared before me and I fell into hypnotic sleep. Every masterpiece in this great gallery was executed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries which gave the world its best art and literature since the palmy days of Greece.

On September 14 we left Florence for the Eternal City. Until that hour no journey of my life had created

such excitement and wonderful expectations. I began to look for Rome as soon as we left Florence, and while I did not see the City of Seven Hills for seven hours, I saw many interesting things along the journey.

Italy furnishes perhaps the best picture in the world of the blending of the old and new civilization. Ancient castles in proud decay stand side by side with modern mansions. Gasoline-propelled tractors and men ploughing with five yoke of oxen as they did two thousand years ago were seen all along the journey. High-powered automobiles and old two-wheeled carts pulled by a horse, ox and an ass going down the same road. There were donkey carts of the same style seen by Cicero and steam engines of the most modern make moving through the same country. In one large town we saw an old dilapidated stone house, with a jackass looking out of the third story window, standing by an up-to-date dwelling. We passed women wearing ancient styles walking on the same streets with women who were dressed like Harlem vamps on Seventh Avenue.

At twelve-thirty our train dashed across the same Tiber that Romulus, Remus and the mighty Caesars crossed centuries before. One hour and fifty minutes later we saw the seven hills covered with ruined walls, great mansions in decay together with such magnificent churches as our eyes had never beheld, and we knew that we were in old Rome and new Rome.

"Few words excite the imagination like Rome. Few words are so pregnant with meaning as Rome. Rome

stands for antiquity, greatness, wealth, splendor, heroism, power, conquest, liberty, law, self-control, beauty and mighty men. It also stands for cruelty, jealousy, strife, luxury, humiliation and death." This is from a book entitled, *The Sights of Rome*, published by Thomas Cook and Son.

Rome represents the rise and fall of the greatest empire the world has ever known. For centuries she ruled the world, and then in a few years ruined herself. Roman history began with Romulus and Remus on Palatine Hill seven hundred and fifty-three years before the birth of Christ. According to tradition these two kings whose hearts beat as one were saved from starvation by nursing the breast of a she-wolf. The old cave is still pointed out on Palatine Hill where they went daily for their wolf milk. This tradition is so deeply entrenched in the minds of the Romans that they have not only executed it in bronze and marble, but even to this day the government keeps a live wolf on the hill which is venerated as no other living animal.

Rome began on Palatine Hill and gradually extended itself over the other six hills until it became known as the City of Seven Hills. The Mistress of the World and the Eternal City are other names, and they suggest Rome's power and glory. Our word palace comes from Palatine and five of the Caesars built their palaces on this hill. The names of these immortals are Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Domitian and Septimus Severus. The last of these was an African and the only colored man who ever ruled Rome. Not much of these

palaces remain but the foundation walls and broken columns, except for the palaces of Augustus. There his wife Livia murdered three men to put her notorious son Tiberius on the throne, and his black deeds covered the world with a blacker shadow while Jesus died on Calvary to become the light of the world. Carvings and frescoes have been unearthed which reveal a horrible story of sin, shame and crime during the days of Livia.

At the foot of Palatine Hill is the great Roman Forum which is entered through two arches: the Arch of Septimus Severus and the Arch of Titus. It is called the Arch of Titus because this famous general entered Rome here in 70 A.D., after his conquest of Jerusalem. He had a column from Solomon's Temple and the golden candlesticks and thirty-five thousand Jewish captives were dragged behind his chariot wheels. As I stood under this Arch I could still hear the echo of the triumphant march of the Roman Army coming down the Appian Way and the voice of the Son of God from Mt. Olivet reverberating through the centuries: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings and ye would not. Behold your house is left unto you desolate."

Rome had many forums in the heyday of its glory, but the greatest of these was called the Roman Forum. It covers an area of one square mile and was erected

about five hundred years before the angels sang at Bethlehem. No mortar was used in its construction. Its great stones lap each other in such a clever manner, and the rainbow stones are so perfectly fitted in the two arches that these arches are still intact, and in some sections of the mighty structure, the walls are still standing thirty feet high. Earthquakes, storms, the battering rams of more than twenty invading armies and the thundering footfalls of twenty-five hundred years have not been able to shake them down. For nearly a thousand years this Forum was the intellectual, religious, moral and political center of Roman life. It contains temples dedicated to the various gods and several basilicas or courts where justice was administered. It was an ordinary thing for a hundred thousand Romans to meet here and make laws.

There are two great stone platforms in this Forum called the rostrums of Julius Caesar and Mark Antony. From these rostrums the great orators and statesmen delivered addresses which shaped the destiny of the Empire and of the world. I stood on the rostrum where Julius Caesar, Mark Antony, Catiline, Cicero and Seneca delivered the speeches which have become the greatest classics of Roman literature. I stood for thirty minutes by the rostrum from which Mark Antony delivered his famous oration over the dead body of Julius Caesar which has been paraphrased by Shakespeare and which made Brutus tremble in his boots. Again and again Caesar, Catiline and the immortal Cicero swayed a hundred thousand people here by

their matchless eloquence. Cicero's speeches on moral reform delivered from this rostrum incited those who were hardest hit to murder him.

Among those flayed alive for corrupt living was Fulvia, the dissolute wife of Mark Antony. She was so bitter because of the public attacks made on her by Cicero that when he was murdered she had his head cut off, the tongue split and the head placed on this rostrum. More than a hundred thousand people came to see that silent tongue which had fired their hearts and scorched their souls. This inspired a noble Roman to exclaim, "Cicero drew more in his death than in his life!"

The most gripping building in the Forum is the Temple of the Vestal Virgins. The ruins show that it was a large round building. It was here the vestal virgins lived who kept the sacred fires of Rome burning for one thousand years. These virgins were selected by the Emperor and other ruling powers when they were eight years old and were brought here; they took a vow to live a chaste life until they were forty years old. During the last centuries of Roman history, they became the concubines of the emperors, and instead of being used to keep sacred fires burning they were used at the fights in the Colosseum to judge when people should be murdered or set free. In their conduct we may read the history of Rome's glory and Rome's disgrace.

As long as they were vestal virgins in reality, as long as they kept the sacred fires of Rome burning, Rome

stood as the City of Seven Hills and conquered and ruled the world; but when the words vestal virgin became a parody on virtue and the sacred fires were allowed to die out while they kindled the fires of lust and sat in the Colosseum and turning their thumbs down, decided the fate of men, Rome began to decline and the house in which the vestal virgins lived became a wreck and a ruin—a symbol of the downfall of Rome.

The greatest architectural monument left by the Romans, if not the greatest on earth, is the famous or, rather, infamous Colosseum. This building was begun by Vespasian in 75 A.D. and completed by Titus five years later. Fifty thousand Jewish and Christian slaves were used in the work of construction, more than half of whom died by hardships imposed upon them by cruel Roman taskmasters. It is perhaps the most perfect amphitheatre in the world, four stories high with walls ten feet thick. It was so strongly built that 1900 years have had very little effect on its walls. It was so solidly constructed that Lord Byron said of it:

> While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand;
> When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall,
> And when Rome falls,—the World.

It had a seating capacity of eighty-seven thousand and was originally used as a mammoth pleasure house. But the mimic sea and land battles and other great pageants first staged there proved too tame for the bloodthirsty Romans. It was therefore turned into an

arena of blood. At first wild animals were brought here from all parts of the world and turned loose to entertain the people by tearing each other to pieces. A celebration was held here for one hundred days during the reign of Titus when five thousand animals killed each other while thousands of spectators screamed their approval. These animals were brought to the Colosseum in big horse-drawn cars through tunnels under the streets like our subways. The indentation made in the rock pavement by these big cars loaded with lions, leopards, tigers, wildcats, boa constrictors and the like may still be seen.

The blood of animals finally failed to satisfy the Roman thirst for cruelty, and the arena was turned into a prize-fighting ring. Prize fighting in those days was horrible beyond description. The combatants consisted of thousands of slaves brought from every conquered province, and they were called gladiators. These men fought each other generally with swords and spears. Whenever a man was sent to the floor by a sword thrust or a blow, the victor would place his foot upon the victim's body and look up to the vestal virgins to determine his fate.

Despite the fact that the floor was covered with sawdust to absorb the blood, blood was often ankle-deep in the arena. Excitement ran so high one day that the mother of the Emperor Commodus rushed down from her high seat, divested herself of every stitch of clothing and washed her nude body in the blood of dead and dying men lying all about her, while eighty-seven

thousand people shouted their delight. This woman gave the world Commodus, one of the cruelest men who ever lived.

You can readily see how these people were prepared to use the Colosseum to persecute and kill Christians. This persecution was begun by Nero and carried on by Commodus and others until Constantine in the fourth century proclaimed the Christian religion the religion of the Empire. Nero was so vile that his name is still hissed in Rome.

The only logical place to go from the Colosseum is out the famous Appian Way. The Appian Way is the oldest and best-known road in the world. It stretches from Rome to Brindisi, a distance of three hundred miles and was built centuries before Christ carried the cross up the Via Dolorosa. Every place on the Appian Way is rich with ancient history. We come first to the ruins of the Baths of Caracalla which covered four hundred and forty-four thousand square yards and where thirty-six thousand people could bathe at one time. The architects of the Pennsylvania Railroad Station got their best ideas from this building. During the days of Rome's decline this mammoth building became the most immoral clubhouse the world has ever known. Here thousands of men and women would undress and bathe together. Next to the Colosseum this building was perhaps more responsible for Rome's decline and fall than any other.

Four things make the Appian Way interesting to Christians: Paul's journey over it, the Mamertine

Prison, where tradition says Paul was beheaded, the Domini Quo Vadis Church and the Catacombs. The Catacombs are the most historical Christian spot outside of the Holy Land. They are about ninety feet under the ground and cover an area of twelve square miles. At first they were used as a burial place. The Church of St. Sebastian is erected over the entrance to the Catacombs. This church rests upon the foundation walls of the home of Hermes, whose name is mentioned in the fourteenth verse of the sixteenth chapter of Romans. In that Epistle Paul sends greetings to Hermes, and it is very probable that Peter and Paul both lodged with Hermes sometime during their stay in Rome. Tradition says that their dead bodies rested in his house before they were buried.

As with lighted candle you descend the old stone steps, which lead ninety feet down to the Catacombs, you read this inscription on the walls made by Hermes: "Here I lived for seventy-five years." Down in this subterranean graveyard we counted hundreds and hundreds of stone and brick coffins. It is said that if all these coffins could be brought out and placed in a row, that row would be five hundred miles long. On one coffin we read the name of St. Sebastian and on another that of St. Cecilia, showing that both of these martyrs and saints were buried here.

In this gloomy place we saw the bones of thousands of Christians awaiting the blast of the resurrection trumpet. On the walls are inscriptions telling of the sufferings of the Christians who fell asleep here. The

names of Peter and Paul appear more than a hundred and fifty times on these walls. These inscriptions were made by the thousands of Christians who were persecuted by Nero and other emperors in Rome. For years they lived and worshiped in these dark passages amid the dead; they were brought water and bread by sympathetic friends from the outside. How any of them could breathe here month after month God only knows, for I was nearly suffocated after spending an hour in this place of gloomy memories.

We were glad to go back to Rome and worship at St. Peter's, the largest, the most gorgeous and costly church on the face of the earth. It was started by Constantine in 400 A.D. at the close of the awful period of persecution which drove the saints to the Catacombs and was not completed until the sixteenth century; thus twelve hundred years were spent in the work of construction; the cost was one hundred million dollars. The building is constructed of marble brought from all parts of the world, including a column from Solomon's Temple.

No tongue has ever described and no tongue can ever describe St. Peter's. It was designed by many architects including the famous Michelangelo. Its dome was copied from the Pantheon, and its interior is modeled after the arches and basilicas of the Roman Forum and the Baths of Caracalla. Everywhere you turn in the great interior of this church which holds about forty thousand you see some heathen shrine or pagan design which has been transformed to the glory

of God. The tomb in which Emperor Hadrian was buried has been brought here and is now used as a baptismal font. In the center of the building is a great statue of Peter, made out of the bronze statue of Jupiter by order of Gregory XIV. Peter holds two keys in his hand, one of heaven and the other of hell. His big bronze toe is worn almost completely off by visitors' kisses. This is where the story of kissing the Pope's toe originated. It is not the Pope's toe, but the bronze toe of Peter that people kiss. During each of our visits there was a long line of people waiting to kiss the toe as they passed by his statue.

In the center of the main aisle is the most gorgeous and costly altar in the world; it is made of four hundred and fifty thousand pounds of bronze taken from the Pantheon. Thus the altar of all the gods has been molded into the altar of the Lord our God, who is one Lord. This altar is built over the spot covered once by the circus of Nero. We walked down a pair of steps to the level of Nero's circus where we were informed that in less than three hundred years after the Resurrection of Jesus more than four million Christians were slaughtered for their hope in Christ.

Around this great altar are eighty-nine lamps which burn perpetually, representing the eighty-nine days Peter is supposed to have spent in the Mamertine Prison before he was crucified on Janiculan Hill. Under this altar is a great silver coffin in which Peter's body is said to rest, and back of the altar is the throne of St. Peter with popes, bishops and cardinals bowing

before him. Instead of trying to describe the sculptured and painted art of this, the greatest cathedral on earth, let me attempt to describe a service which we attended there one Sunday morning.

The nave of the church is about five hundred feet long with chapels on the side called transepts. Often there are half dozen services held at the same time in these transepts. Rarely can you walk down the nave without smelling sweet incense. We went that Sunday morning to the transept where the famous Sistine Choir was to sing. The choir had thirty-two selected and qualified voices and was attached to the court of the Pope. This choir cannot be compared with any group of singers in the world. There were present that morning two cardinals, five bishops, thirty priests and several altar boys. I was so engrossed in the paintings on the walls and ceiling of the transept that at first I did not pay much attention to the services.

This painting, "The Transfiguration," is one of Raphael's masterpieces. The walls are lined with patriarchs and prophets. They were so lifelike that they seemed to be taking part in the services. On the ceiling is the whole Transfiguration. Peter, James and John are so overpowered by their emotions of joy that they want to live there forever. The faces and garments of Moses and Elijah are shining with an unearthly light. Jesus is transparently white, and His face glows like the sun.

While I was waiting to hear God speak out of the celestial cloud chariot, the services which were in Latin

ended. An altar boy passed the censer, containing burning incense, to a priest who waved it in front of the faces of the two cardinals, then before the faces of the five bishops, then in the faces of the priests, then in the faces of the altar boys. At last he walked up and down the aisles waving it in the face of the entire congregation. The whole room was filled with a perfumed white smoke. As I looked around the smoke was creeping up the walls, covering the patriarchs and prophets, on across the ceiling and spreading like a thin veil over the whole Transfiguration scene.

That Sunday I saw God and heard him say, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him." Dr. Hayes and I did not utter a word until we had walked two blocks from St. Peter's. We had both had the same experience. We were in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. Why can't we have in the Protestant churches a closer union between the simple piety of Palestine and the beautiful art of Greece?

Naples is the largest, most beautiful and the most wicked city in Italy. It encircles the Bay of Naples like a rainbow. The bay is eighteen miles wide and its waters are blue as indigo. On a calm day it reflects the shadows of the houses which for miles fringe its amphitheatre-like shape. Above the city is a circular ridge of hills and mountains dotted with the most picturesque villas, mansions and grand hotels.

Far above the tallest of these mountains stands old Vesuvius belching red hot rocks, smoke and ashes. Everywhere you turn it looks you in the face and seems

to be moving toward you like a great steamship weighing a billion tons. Nothing adds to the beauty and sublimity of Naples like this awful mountain pouring out a ceaseless stream of fire and smoke. As you look in every direction you cannot help feeling that the old saying, "See Naples and die," is not an exaggeration.

We did not lose any time in warming our feet before the fires of Vesuvius, which is one of the greatest attractions in the world. The distance from the Bay of Naples to the top of Vesuvius is about fifteen miles. Four thousand feet of this distance is so steep that our car had to be drawn up by a wire cable. As we walked around the mountain from the car-landing to the mouth of Vesuvius, we could hear the earth groaning and grumbling beneath our feet. The awful mouth of the crater is about one thousand feet wide, with smoke, fire, ashes, sulphur and rocks coming out of it every minute. All around this frightful crater, smoke was oozing out of the earth from under our very feet.

Some people walked close enough to the fire to have the soles of their shoes burned. I have always been afraid of hell and I kept a distance of about three hundred feet from what I considered the nearest thing to hell I had ever seen. I actually picked up a piece of brimstone, still warm, which had been thrown out of the crater. From the top of Vesuvius, four thousand feet up, we had a wonderful view of beautiful Naples, its magnificent bay and the charming towns all around. Some of these towns are not charming for they cannot be seen. This volcano has buried many a town, all of

them (except Pompeii) so deeply that they cannot be excavated.

The most surprising thing of all is that people have built houses all around the foot of this mountain, and they have some of the prettiest and finest gardens and vineyards in Italy. The grapes from which the famous Lachryma Christi wine is produced grow amidst the rocks which Vesuvius has been belching up for centuries. This wine is considered by some experts the best in the world. It is so fine that it is called the "tears of Christ" for that is the meaning of Lachryma Christi. They brought us a bottle of this wine with our lunch. We ate the lunch and threw the bottle away.

Torre del Greco is a town of thirty-five thousand inhabitants with the smoke of Vesuvius floating over it every day. The houses are not only built out of lava, but they are built upon lava. Three times this city was buried and three times people came back and built houses upon its ashes and cinders. The earth is doubtless hollow for ten or fifteen miles under the houses where these people live. The last great eruption took place in 1906, and the government inspectors said to me they were likely to have another one any day. I sent up a fervent prayer that it would not be the day that I was there. To help the Lord answer my prayer I caught the first car leaving the mountain. We stopped halfway down the mountain and had dinner in a hotel.

I am supposed to have the memory of an elephant but I cannot tell you a single thing we had to eat that day, there under the awful shadow of the smoke from

Vesuvius. I was listening for Vesuvius to make an unusual noise and kept my hat, cane and camera in sight. Had he made a loud noise at any time I would have passed every car between there and the foot of the mountain. My fears were only partly allayed when we reached the base of Vesuvius and boarded a train for Pompeii, for our ride of fifteen miles around the base of Vesuvius kept us all the time within sight of the crater belching fire and smoke like some awful angry beast ready to devour. Even when we reached what is called the "resurrected city" the black smoke of Vesuvius was still floating over us.

Pompeii is one of the oldest, if not the oldest city in Italy. Long before Christ was born, it was a flourishing community of thirty thousand souls. It was, perhaps, founded by the early Greek settlers, for the Temple of Hercules, recently unearthed, is believed to date back eight hundred years before Christ or a century before Romulus founded Rome. Perhaps for a thousand years Pompeii grew, flourished, sang, danced, ate, drank and made merry, without the slightest intimation that there was a mountain of suppressed burning fire throwing its ominous shadow every evening across its places of pleasure and most horrible haunts of sin. Cicero, Vergil, Augustus Caesar and other notables built villas on the vine-clad slopes of this sleeping Vulcan or God of Fire.

"At two A.M., August 23, 79 A.D.," says one writer, "when the sky was serene and the sea calm, a terrible rumbling was heard in Vesuvius." A large number of

people left, but many stayed, and there is every evidence that they not only stayed, but continued to enjoy the circuses, the animal fights, the gladiatorial combats, dances and immorality too gross and slimy to appear in print. An hourglass found by the excavators pointed to 2 P.M. This shows that every person had twelve hours to leave the city from the time of the first warning until the deluge of ashes and cinders came down. No attempt was made to unearth the city for seventeen hundred years. As an evidence of the Herculean task involved, only about two-thirds of the city has been uncovered after two hundred years of digging.

The unearthed city of Pompeii gives us the best illustration of the old Roman life. Here we saw the heavy rock-paved streets, avenues and piazzas worn by the wheels of chariots pulled by slaves, theatres, forums, circuses, heathen temples, banks, houses of commerce, fine dwellings with costly frescoed ceilings, mosaic floors, the poor man's dwelling of rough stone, laundries, mills for grinding grain, presses for making wine, graveyards, cooking utensils of every kind, pitchers left at the well by frightened people, beautiful vases still on the mantels, marble statues, bundles of burnt cloth in the dry goods stores, theatre tickets, a pot of soup standing for more than nineteen hundred years with the lid on, the skeletons of men, women and children just as they were buried beneath the awful rain of Vesuvius. Some are clutching each other with their bony fingers; one man was found with a pick by his side, showing that he was trying to dig his

way out after the ashes had covered his house; a skeleton of a woman grasping her jewelry and costly wares, showing that she was trying to escape with her wealth; dogs twisted in agony trying to bite their tails.

The saddest and most informing sight of all the sights in this resurrected city are the houses of assignation where the most vile forms of immorality were practiced. Decency prohibits me from giving a description of the things I saw both inside and outside of these places. I say outside for there are not only pictures inside of these houses of lust of nude men and women engaged in performances which would make the angels in hell blush, but on the outside of these buildings are signs of unchastity and vulgarity that I would even hesitate to relate to a close male friend. A walk through the streets of the resurrected city of Pompeii will tell you why God buried the vulgar and Sodom-like city out of the sight of men and angels for seventeen centuries.

Let us turn from these thoughts of vulgarity and vileness to the Bay of Naples, which is known the world over for its beauty. When seen in sunlight or moonlight it defies all language to describe it. Its waters are so blue that Dr. Hayes said to me, "I am sure that the women here never put any bluing in the water when they wash." Fortunately for us we had a front room in the Metropo Hotel, which is less than one hundred feet from the bay, so we could see it night and day. For an hour at a time I sat watching the azure skies and the blue water. The sky and water

at Naples seemed to be engaged in an everlasting beauty contest. I read one evening by the open window, "The heavens declare the glory of God," etc. I closed my Bible with a feeling that I had never before correctly read or rightly appreciated the Nineteenth Psalm.

While we saw the bay from our window and from every angle on land including a view of it from the top of Vesuvius, no lover of beauty could ever be satisfied to visit Naples without a sail on the bay, so we started out with a Cook party one morning for a sail to Capri. You could see the Island of Capri, dividing the bay from the Mediterranean Sea, from our hotel window. I thought it was about three miles from us. After our ship had steamed rapidly for one hour we did not seem to be one foot nearer to the island. I turned to Cook's man and said, "Look here! How far are we from Capri?" "Eighteen miles," he replied. I then learned that it was the blue sky and blue water that made it look so near.

Capri is the most charming and picturesque little town I have ever seen. The mountain out there in the sea is about twenty-five hundred feet high. On its slopes and rocky ledges the most beautiful white cottages are built, but the city of Capri is on the top of the mountain and we had to be pulled up by a wire cable. Of all the quaint and ancient towns we saw on our fourteen thousand mile trip, Capri was the most quaint and ancient-like. The houses have flat roofs, and many have been standing there for thousands of years.

The people dress just as they did during the days of the Caesars. They live chiefly on the tourists who flock there by the thousands. Cameo beads, mother-of-pearl and other souvenirs constitute the chief commodities of the town.

They ask all sorts of prices for these and then take very much less. One woman wanted thirty lire a string for beads, but I finally got all I dared bring away without getting in a row with the customs officer in New York for thirteen lire. At first I offered her five lire a string, telling her they were made out of macaroni. She flared up and said, "You are no gentleman or Christian," but when I bought several strings and paid her seventeen lire less than she asked she said, "You are a high-class English gentleman and may God's blessing rest upon you."

After dinner at one of the hotels, we drove around the mountain peak in full view of the old broken and time-battered palaces where Caesar Augustus and the notorious Tiberius lived. It was from this little island that Tiberius ordered the commission of some of his most hideous crimes. As we looked from the top of this rugged mass of rocks, wild and precipitous cliffs with oriental houses, vines, flowers and little gardens on ledges washed by the blue waters of the Mediterranean on one side and the Bay of Naples on the other, I said: "No wonder this has been the favorite haunt of artists and poets for three thousand years. No wonder Augustus and Tiberius left the land of the Caesars and came out here to live. No wonder forty

thousand people come here from all corners of the earth every year. No wonder the natives here look as fresh and as beautiful as roses, wrapped in sunshine and smiles."

If I had the privilege of escorting the readers of this book to a small paradise on earth, I would lead them directly to the little Island of Capri which unceasingly bathes its stony feet in the bluest waters in the world and crowns its head with the most azure sky created anywhere by Almighty God. From whatever angle Capri is viewed, it looks like a piece broken off the Garden of Eden that floated out here and anchored itself for the joy and inspiration of the traveler.

Our next stop was at Brindisi, the end of the Italian peninsula on the Adriatic Sea. Brindisi is suffering terribly from old age and decay. Its inhabitants are lazy and shiftless. We arrived at 8 P.M. and everybody had put their lights out and gone to bed. The business men close up their stores from twelve to three for lunch. We will remember Brindisi for three things: first, because the famous Appian Way ends there; second, Vergil the Latin poet died there; third, because from that point we started out on the S.S. *Leopolis* for Egypt and the Holy Land.

Our ship called at the following places in Greece: Corfu, Canea and Candia. The last two places are located on the island of Crete where Paul and the crew were saved and from which they finally proceeded to Puteoli. Paul remained, however, long enough at Crete

to establish a church at Candia, and Titus was left in charge. In the letter he wrote Titus, he declared that the Cretans were always liars and if we are to judge from the hard bargains they tried to drive with us, there has been no change in their nature from the day Paul anchored in their harbor until the day we landed there.

As we steamed away from Crete through the Aegean Sea, we sighted the barren island of Patmos on our left, and our ship turned its nose to cross the Mediterranean, leaving Tunis and Morocco on the right, and headed straight for Alexandria. After two days' sail on the bluest sea I have ever seen and the most silver-like moon paths I have ever beheld, we sighted the continent of Africa at six o'clock in the morning; three hours later our ship docked in the port of Alexandria.

Alexandria was not only known for its trade and commerce, but for its art and learning. The Septuagint version of the Bible was made at Alexandria two hundred and seventy-seven years before Christ. St. Mark, the writer of the second Gospel, established a church here 62 A.D. Apollos, an eloquent preacher and a friend of Paul, was born here. Here Demetrius, Athanasius, Clement, Cyril and many other church fathers lived and exercised a most important influence over the early history of Christianity. Alexander the Great was so enamored of the city that bore his name that in 323 B.C. he was buried here in a gold coffin by his own request. I looked into the stone vault from which one of the Ptolemys stole the gold coffin, leaving a glass one

in its place. Alexandria of today has about five hundred thousand inhabitants and is one of the most important seaports in the east. From here ships leave for the Suez Canal and all the oceans of the world.

Alexandria is perhaps the most cosmopolitan city on earth. You can see every race and religion under the sun on its streets. All kindreds and tribes and tongues meet on its public squares every day as they met at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost—the Turks, Hindus, Telugu Indians, Greeks, Italians, Arabs, Egyptians, Europeans and Americans, every race and every nation dressing as they dress in their native lands. Every two minutes you pass a black man from the Sudan or other parts of Africa wearing his tribal cloth about his waist and bearing the tribal marks in his face. The Bedouins, riding on camels or walking with a long staff, fresh from their holes in the desert, wear dirty robes and dirtier rags about their heads. Watch them or they will put your lights out for three shillings. The Turks and Arabs, most of them barefoot, are there with their long robes of every color and gaudy turbans on their heads. The Egyptian men dress like Europeans, with the exception of a red cap resembling a stovepipe in shape, which they call a fez.

Egypt has the finest farm land in the world. We traveled about three hundred miles through the Nile Delta. Corn, cotton, cows and camels are the chief things raised by the Egyptians. We saw some corn fields more than five miles in extent. It is not necessary to do anything but plough, sow and reap and keep the

land well watered. It rarely rains in Egypt. All land is watered for hundreds of miles by a splendid system of irrigation. Streams from the Nile are run through channels in the fields and from these streams smaller streams are conducted to all parts of the bottom land where they are needed. These muddy streams not only water the crops but enrich the soil. This is why Egypt has the most wonderful corn in the world. As soon as one crop matures, another is planted.

Nearly all the cows of Egypt are of the buffalo type. They furnish milk and meat and are often used for ploughing. During my ten days' travel in Egypt I did not see a plough pulled by a horse. The oxen and cows are used for this purpose, and now and then you will see a plough pulled by a camel. These ploughs are the same kind the Pharaohs used three thousand years ago.

Speaking of camels reminds me that they are the most useful animals in Egypt and the Holy Land. They are used chiefly for transportation and can carry almost as much as a Ford motor. Cotton, corn, wheat, barley, rocks, brick, lumber, furniture are all conveyed to the city's stations and docks by these soft-footed beasts. The country people used them for moving and conveying the whole family from place to place. It is a common sight to see from three to twelve of these "ships of the desert" chained together and loaded with all sorts of commerce and people, on the way from one section of the country to another. One camel is stronger than five horses and has ten times the en-

durance. A horse cannot go a day without water, but a camel can go six days through the burning sands of the desert without drinking. It would be impossible for the Bedouins and Arabs to get along without their camels. They will fight you quicker about their camels than they will about their wives.

The skins of camels are used for clothing by the poorer class. John the Baptist wore a camel's hair garment during his wilderness life, and the people who live in the desert and wilderness still wear clothing made of camel's hair. The Bedouins and Arabs also drink the milk and eat the meat of camels. Our Arab guide said that, "Buffalo cow milk good, but camel milk better. If you are sick, drink camel's milk and it will make you too well. If you are weak, eat camel's meat and it will make you too strong." And from the way some of those dirty fellows smelled, I can certainly agree with the latter assertion.

Cairo, the capital of Egypt, is in the very heart of the Nile Delta. It is the largest and most modern city in Africa, having a population of about nine hundred thousand. While some of its streets are so dirty that you need a gas mask when passing through them, others are as clean and almost as beautiful as the streets of Paris. The city is about ten miles square, with tall palm and acacia trees growing along its main thoroughfares. One never tires of walking its streets and looking at its places of interest. The Nile, creeping through its center like a silver serpent and bearing all sorts of

curious boats upon its bosom, adds much to the attraction of Cairo.

The Moslem University at Cairo is Islam's greatest intellectual center. It has fifteen thousand students and three hundred teachers. These students are given their tuition free, twenty-five thousand loaves of bread a day and spending money, but there is not a chair in this University except those occupied by the professors. All the students sit on the floor to study and recite their lessons. While they study, they rock backwards and forwards like folks getting religion at an old-time camp meeting. They said that kind of motion helped them to think.

Early one morning we started from Cairo for Memphis. The automobile route lay along the edge of the great Sahara Desert. As far as eye could see, the desert sands looked like a great sheet of gold beneath the rising sun. A ride of twenty miles brought us to Memphis, the ancient metropolis of Egypt built by Mena the first king of Egypt more than six thousand years ago. Most of the city has been covered for centuries by the sands blown from the desert. The excavators have revealed broken walls and houses here and there. It is now perhaps the largest date palm grove in Egypt.

In this palm grove where Memphis once stood is a colossal statue of Ramses II, said to be one of the Pharaohs who held the Israelites in bondage. Ramses was one of the greatest, if not the greatest, ruler that Egypt ever had. Judging from his mummy which I

saw, he was a powerful man physically. He had many wives, one hundred and eleven sons and fifty-one daughters.

A ride of about ten minutes across the desert sands brought us to the Mastaba Tombs. This word is used by the Arabs to designate a long stone seat on which the farm hands rest after a long day's work. The Mastaba Tombs consist of several rooms under the ground with stone seats for rest. We went into two of these tombs but I shall only describe the Tomb of Ti, for this is the finest of all the Mastaba Tombs.

Ti was not a king, but the secretary of a king. It is said that he rose from poverty and obscurity to this great place of eminence. He must have gained great riches, for the interior of his tomb is perhaps the finest in Egypt. It covers an area of half a square mile and has many rooms with the most elaborate hieroglyphic inscriptions and pictures in bas-relief. His own picture appears about ten times, representing him in his official position and his social functions, attended everywhere by a retinue of servants and surrounded by the leaders of political and social life of his day. He is seen hunting, fishing and enjoying other sports and even worshiping the sacred bulls and other Egyptian deities.

His wife shares his honors in many pictures. She is very beautiful, and it is said she was the daughter of the king under whom he served. He must have been very fond of other women for there were hundreds of pictures of some of the prettiest women I have ever seen painted on the walls of his tomb. These women

were life-size and were dressed in all the fashions of his day. One woman had on a hobble skirt; but talk about short skirts! A large number of these women had on skirts that were eleven inches above their knees. There are at least one thousand bas-relief pictures on the walls of the subterranean chamber of Ti's gorgeous tomb, portraying the social, political, economic and industrial life of these people.

On our ride from Memphis to Giza along the western bank of the Nile, we passed not less than seventy pyramids, but the most famous of these are the three at Giza known as the Three Big Pyramids. They are called Cheops, Chephren and Menkaurê. About two miles of this journey had to be made on camels.

Had you seen me riding across the desert on a camel swaying backwards and forwards like a tree swayed by the wind, your sides would have split laughing. My camel was white and her name was Beauty. She was thirteen years old, but they often live to the age of thirty-five. She had on all kinds of gorgeous trappings, including a string of beads around her neck, and when my driver, who was born in the desert, spoke to her in the language of the Bedouin, she lay upon her stomach for me to mount the saddle. When she got up on her front legs, I fell backwards; when she got up on her hind legs, I fell forward. I soon learned to balance myself, and we found our camels moving toward the pyramids on the edge of the great desert.

The first pyramid in this group of three and the only one which I shall describe is called Cheops and

is named after the Pharaoh who reigned about fifty-seven hundred years ago. This pyramid is said to be the largest building of any kind in the world. It covers thirteen acres and is composed of two million three hundred thousand stones, each stone having an average weight of two and one-half tons. It is four hundred and fifty feet from its base to its apex, seven hundred and sixty feet long on each of its square sides. It took one hundred thousand men twenty years to build it. All of this cruel labor was performed just to make a resting place for the body of the great Pharaoh, Cheops.

I did not know until I went to Egypt why the pyramids were built so large. The old Egyptians were great believers in immortality. They thought that a man's spirit went on housekeeping after death, and so these great tombs were built to contain all of his household furniture and clothes. When he died his body was not only placed there, but everything was moved out of his house and arranged in the interior of these big pyramids.

I had the great privilege of seeing the furniture from King Tut's tomb, which was uncovered in 1923. It consisted, as far as I can remember, of two cedar-wood chests for clothes plated inside with gold, tables, chairs, beds, alabaster perfumery bottles, vases, a loving cup, a snake inside of a case, all kinds of jewelry and dishes of the most costly make. I need not tell you that the Egyptians were the most successful embalmers the world has ever known. No one has ever

discovered the secret of their embalming. I saw the mummies of a number of kings and noted Egyptians that looked almost as natural as they did five thousand years ago when they died. One king who died from tuberculosis still had the look of suffering on his face, and the pits could be seen in the face of one who died from smallpox. Their toenails and fingernails are still intact, and the hair is still on their heads. As we walked on from one pyramid to the other, we remembered that it was here on these sands the great battle was fought between the French and Egyptians, and we could hear Napoleon saying to his soldiers, "Go! Go! And recollect that from the heights of yonder monuments forty ages look down upon your deeds."

From the pyramids we went to the Great Sphinx built on the same plateau of sand. This is the greatest riddle ever constructed by man. It has been standing there, with the body of a lion, representing strength, and the face of a man representing intelligence, for more than five thousand years. Some call it the "god of the rising sun." No one knows why it was built or what it represents. It is therefore called "the riddle of the ages," and because it smiles so fiercely at you across the hot sands of the desert it is sometimes called the "father of terror."

It is one hundred and seventy-two feet long, and sixty-six feet high. Its face is thirteen feet eight inches wide, ears, four and one-half feet long, nose, five feet seven inches wide. Enemies have tried to tear it down, ten thousand sandstorms have tried to cover

it up, fifty centuries have tried to grind it to dust and nothingness, but it smiles on and on. Does it represent the indestructibility of mankind, standing there so near the tombs of the dead? Does it say that man is immortal? With its face turned toward the rising sun, does it represent hope? We will never know. The dead who built it cannot speak, and the God who saw them erect it and knows the intent of man's heart will not tell us.

As I stood there and looked into that frowning, smiling face, it seemed to me that I heard those big stone lips say, "I was here when Abraham passed by with his wife Sarah and declared that she was his sister. I was here when the Ishmaelites brought Joseph from the Holy Land and sold him to Mr. Potiphar. I was here when Mrs. Potiphar lied on Joseph and sent him to prison. I was here the day when Joseph came out of prison and stepped into the second chariot of the nation while all Egypt cried, 'Bow the knee!' I was here when Joseph's brethren came down with fear and trembling and fulfilled his dreams by bowing to him like sheaves of wheat. I was here when old Jacob and the seventy souls of his household came down to keep from starving to death. I was here when a Pharoah rose up who knew not Joseph and bound the Israelites in slavery. I was here when the cruel Egyptian taskmasters beat the backs of God's chosen people, and when the midwives murdered the babies of the Hebrew children. I was here the day that Pharaoh's daughter pulled the babe Moses out of the

bulrushes. I was here the day that Moses slew the Egyptian slave driver. I was here when the flies and the locusts swept over the land of Egypt. I was here the night that God divided the Red Sea, and the Israelites walked over dry-shod. I was standing here the day that Mary walked by carrying the Son of God in her arms, and I will be here when He comes again riding on the clouds of heaven to gather His loved ones home."

No colored man can go to Egypt and study the past and present achievements of its people without being proud that he is a colored man, for the Egyptians were undoubtedly colored people. The features of all the pictures that I have been telling you about in the tombs, pyramids and galleries of the old Egyptians are Negroid. All their statues have Negro features. Anyone who has seen the picture of the Sphinx knows that it resembles a genuine colored man. You cannot look at it one minute without thinking of Jack Johnson. If the Egyptians are not closely related to the Negroes of America, then all their pictures and carvings of ancient times and their color and features of modern times grossly misrepresent them. Except for the red fezzes on their heads and their Arabic language, I met people in every town and country place in the land of Ham who reminded me of every colored man I had seen in America. If these men and women would put on our clothes and walk through Harlem without talking, a Philadelphia lawyer could not tell them from colored Americans. They represent every

color that we represent, and they possess many traits in common with Aunt Hagar's children in the United States.

We had been abroad for three months and seeing so many colored people in Egypt made me homesick. On our outward voyage we spent ten days crossing the Mediterranean, calling at two Grecian ports. On our homeward journey we booked on one of the swiftest French liners, which made it from Alexandria, Egypt, to Marseilles, France, in four days. While we did not stop between these two ports, we sailed past the coast of Sicily where we got a fine view of Mt. Etna, more than ten thousand feet high, in volcanic action. Then we passed through the straits of Messina and saw Stromboli, one of the most active volcanoes in the world. It looks like a colossal pyramid in the azure waters of the Mediterranean, sending a great column of white smoke against the soft blue skies of Italy; and now and then a stream of hot water and black ashes floats down its steep slope to the sea. On every side it is dotted with beautiful cottages, olive orchards and vineyards.

As we watched Stromboli for an hour, it seemed like a huge ship puffing smoke and following in our wake. We steamed on, with Elba, the island of Napoleon's banishment, on one side and Corsica, the island of his birth, on the other. On a clear day, the great General could easily look from the island of his captivity to the island of his nativity.

After a few days' stay in Paris and London, we pro-

cured passage on the S.S. *Mauretania* and on the day after Thanksgiving landed in the city of New York from which we had been absent for one hundred and three days. We had felt every climate from the frigid zone of Mt. Hermon to the torrid zone on the plains of Siddim. We had eaten everything from the slick German eels to the tough Jerusalem goats. We had sailed five seas and tasted the water of the Dead Sea. We had crossed the English Channel when it was so riotous that our ship could scarcely dock. For three days after leaving Queenstown, Ireland, the wind velocity was never under forty-five miles an hour. Seemingly, one moment our ship was trying to scrape the bottom of the Atlantic, and the next moment it was attempting to whisper to the man in the moon. But we never missed a meal or experienced a day of sickness, except homesickness—and that vanished the moment we saw the home folks standing on the Cunard Dock to welcome us.*

* Reference is made several times in this book to my travels in Palestine. These travels will appear soon in another volume entitled, *From Bethlehem to Olivet.*

Chapter 7

THE RISING TIDE

Be not selfish in thy greed,
Pass it on;
Look upon thy brother's need,
Pass it on;
Live for self, you live in vain;
Live for Christ, you live again;
Live for him, with Him you reign—
Pass it on.

George C. Stebbins

AT New Haven I learned that a well-organized church does not need the pump-priming presence of the pastor every Sunday. More than once I was away from the Immanuel Church six and eight consecutive weeks, and it did not make a difference of five dollars a week in the offerings. Before going abroad, twelve years had been spent organizing the Abyssinian Church, and I doubt if my being away one hundred and three days subtracted one hundred and three dollars from the financial report. I further question whether there were one hundred and three less worshipers at the church on any Sunday because I was not in the pulpit. And Rev. Marshall L. Shepherd,

the leader during my absence, had had only one year's experience in pastoral work. The church had succeeded beyond the most sanguine expectations of the most optimistic among us. The Building Committee expected it would require about two years to build up a permanent Sunday morning congregation of two thousand. During the year following the dedication and the months I was away, the morning audience never registered below this figure.

The psychological effect of having a pastor fresh from Egypt, and especially from the Holy Land, was obvious to all. I brought back a can of water from the Jordan, poured it into the baptismal pool and sixty-three persons received the ordinance of baptism. The deacons emptied into the communion wine a quart of water which I obtained from Jacob's well, and there was not a vacant seat at the communion service. That evening I pictured Christ begging for water from Jacob's well and offering to the giver the water of eternal life. Everyone said it was one of the most impressive evening services I ever conducted.

Beginning with Bethlehem, I gave talks on all the towns touched by the life of Jesus. My fourteen thousand mile trip abroad was covered by four lectures which were first delivered in the Abyssinian Church. From these lectures the church netted about two thousand dollars. Whether it was a pay lecture or a Sunday talk, it looked as if all Harlem was trying to hear it. Overflow services were held in the lecture room to accommodate the people, and from then on

these services have been a prominent part of our morning worship.

This overflow service is not a young people's church or anything distinct from the worship in the main auditorium, except that it has a separate choir and preacher. The same deacons, trustees and ushers manage both services. We have learned from experience that any other arrangement will create mischief.

In six months I made the Abyssinian Church feel that from any angle one of the best investments it had ever made was the sending of its pastor to Palestine. It was not only a good investment for the church, but it sent my stock as a preacher and lecturer to a high level. Before this trip I considered myself fortunate to receive twenty-five dollars for such lectures as "Little Foxes" and "Some Don'ts to Be Remembered." When the papers carried the startling news that my church was averaging about five hundred dollars a lecture, I received more invitations offering me fifty dollars a lecture than I could accept. At this figure I delivered three lectures in Shiloh and two in the Second Baptist Church, Washington. During 1925, invitations came from many institutions of learning, including Union Theological Seminary, New York City, which I addressed on April 9. Up to that date, so far as I know, Dr. George E. Haynes was the only other colored man to enjoy this distinction.

Perhaps the most flattering invitation received that year came from my old classmate, Dr. T. L. Griffith, and the Program Committee of Second Baptist Church,

Los Angeles, California. They were just completing the finest church edifice and community center building west of Chicago and wanted me to preach the dedicatorial sermon in January, 1926, and to deliver two lectures on my fourteen thousand mile trip abroad. My railroad fare to and from New York was paid, and an honorarium of one hundred and eighty dollars. For three weeks I was the guest of the Second Baptist Church, and the colored and white citizens of Los Angeles tried to excel each other in making me feel at home. I was the order of the day at the white Baptist Ministers' Conference, and the Baptist Home Mission Society, through its colored representative, Dr. W. R. Carter, placed a car at my disposal.

I have never found such a warm social atmosphere anywhere as that of Los Angeles. The last ten days I was there I did not eat a meal at the home assigned me by the church. I was invited each day to breakfast, dinner, supper, and often to a midnight lunch. The biographer of Vice-President Hobart says he killed himself eating late dinners in Washington. To keep from committing suicide, I left Los Angeles ahead of my schedule. I just did escape, for I suffered an acute attack of appendicitis on the trip from Denver to New York, and Dr. Walter Gray Crump, the noted surgeon, kept me in bed a week when I reached home.

An editorial in the *California Eagle*, January 12, 1926, best expresses the welcome given me by the city:

"We are pleased indeed to have in our midst a great preacher, leader, builder, diplomat and statesman such as Dr. A. Clayton Powell, pastor of the great Abyssinian Church of New York City. His service is best attested by the great organization which he has welded together and his genius in leadership and as the ages roll on and on, future generations will marvel at his accomplishments. This great leader is great because of his simplicity of manner and his aptitude of ever being a part and parcel of the people. Thoroughly democratic and easy to approach, a friend to everybody, no wonder he has reached the exalted position which he has. The California Eagle bids him a most hearty welcome in our midst and appreciates with Dr. Griffith and the Baptist denomination the inspiration which he brings to the people of this section."

I believe in the second coming of Christ to this earth. I am frank to say that I cannot explain it. I do not know whether He will come as a person or as an overwhelming, transforming, vitalizing influence, but I do know that the world will not get any better until He comes. We are living in the church age, and the church age has not and cannot save the world. If you believe that the church will save the world, a second reading of the New Testament will assure you that you are seriously mistaken. A careful reading of the four Gospels will convince any open mind that the world will grow worse and worse during the church

dispensation, and that the kingdoms of this world will not become the kingdom of God until there is a second great manifestation of Christ. This transformation will be quick and sudden, like a flash of lightning from east to west. In the words of Paul, "We shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." This will be the end of sin and sorrow and death. We will have a new earth and a new heaven wherein dwelleth righteousness. This is the "Blessed Hope" held out everywhere in the scriptures. If this is not true, then the Bible is only a beautiful book of fiction, like *Gone With the Wind*. I believe that this second manifestation is imminent, and that such characters as Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini emphasize this imminence as well as the need of the Second Coming.

This blessed fact is so deeply rooted in my nature that I refused to buy a burial plot until I was sixty-one years old. The reason I purchased this plot in Flushing Cemetery, New York, on March 15, 1926, and erected a monument later is a very interesting part of the story of my life. Two of my warm personal friends will tell you why. The first is a eulogy delivered by Dr. W. P. Hayes; the second is an editorial by Mr. Nelson E. Dixon, written a few days after the tragedy of my daughter's death.

"Mrs. Blanche Fletcher Rhodes was born in New Haven, Conn., July 24, 1898 and passed away March 15, 1926 in the twenty-eighth year of her life. Her

illness was of brief duration, and her death came as a distinct shock to her many friends and acquaintances.

"Mrs. Rhodes attended the public schools of New York City and spent one year in Hartshorn Memorial College, Richmond, Va. She pursued a special course in stenography and typewriting and later displayed such proficiency in her work that her services were sought by some of the largest and most influential institutions in the city. At the time of her last illness she was employed as stenographer by the Board of Education of this city.

"Mrs. Rhodes was converted and baptized when only six years of age and at once became an active little worker in the Immanuel Baptist Church, New Haven, of which her distinguished father was pastor. On coming to New York, her membership was transferred to the Abyssinian Church and here it remained until she was called to the service above. Being a member of the choir of the Abyssinian Church, she would often help her father apply the message of the gospel by the effective manner in which she would render an appropriate musical selection.

"Mrs. Rhodes, despite the fact that she went to work regularly, despite the fact that she had many outside interests which exacted toll in the way of time and energy was preeminently a home-loving woman. She bestowed unusual care and labor upon her home, and sought to make it as beautiful and attractive as possible. No one could visit that home without paying

tribute to the one who presided over it in such queenly fashion.

"On last Monday morning at three o'clock, Mrs. Rhodes' condition became so serious that it was necessary to rush her to the hospital at once. She was taken to the Edgecombe Sanitarium, where an operation was performed by the eminent surgeon, Dr. Crump. When the time came for the operation, Mrs. Rhodes begged the surgeon not to remove any organ that he was not compelled to take out in order to save her life. After being assured by the surgeon that he would not, she told him with a smile she was ready. The same smile returned after the operation. During the day she sang that comforting old hymn, 'Simply Trusting Every Day.' She told her father and mother she was praying and wanted them to pray with her. After a long day during which the scales constantly alternated between hope and fear, Mrs. Rhodes breathed her last about midnight and the curtain fell.

"She leaves to mourn their loss a kind and devoted husband, a sweet little daughter, a grief-stricken mother and father, a loving brother and a great host of other relatives and friends. May He whose eye is on the sparrow, keep watch over her spirit as it wings its flight to fairer shores.

"The eulogist for this occasion would feel more in place by the side of the mourners than standing here in this pulpit. The family of the deceased and my own family have been bound by ties of close friendship for over fifteen years, and to be called upon to deliver

words of eulogy over the lifeless form of a member of the Powell family is almost the same as if I were called to speak over the dead body of one of my nearest relatives. Dr. Powell baptized my wife in old Mount Olivet. He came to me in that dark hour of my life when death claimed her and spoke words of comfort over her prostrate form. Dr. Powell took me by the hand after my bereavement and helped me regain my lost equilibrium. He has been my constant friend, my boon companion, my ministerial 'buddy' during the past fifteen years. We have travelled together, slept together, discussed our problems together, worked out sermons and addresses together, laughed together and wept together. There is no living man who holds a warmer place in my affections and for whom I have a higher regard. Do you wonder then, why my heart is in the seat of the mourners?

"It is a difficult matter to analyze a character or evaluate a life. Man is more or less of an enigma, not only to others, but to himself as well. There are secret recesses of the soul that must forever remain unexplored. There are inner chambers of the heart that can never be invaded. There are sections in the territory of every life where the sign, 'No trespassing allowed' may be observed. Truly man is nature's most mysterious mechanism and creation's most stupendous miracle. 'Thou hast made him a little lower than God,' sang the psalmist. So when the attempt is made to explain or describe a human personality, let it be borne in mind that no final word may be said. One's

knowledge of one's nearest and dearest friend can only be fragmentary and imperfect. Still, it is possible to know each other, at least in part; for it may be said that each man leaves the door of his soul sufficiently ajar, at times, to afford a partial view, at any rate, of the basic elements which enter into the composition of that soul.

"When I remark that Blanche was not easily analyzed or understood, I am merely echoing a statement that all have made who chanced to know her. She did not fall in the easy category of the average woman. She possessed a personality peculiarly her own. She dwelled in a world apart. At times she appeared a bit strange and mysterious even to her closest friends. Persons of this rare type of character are easily misjudged as no doubt she often was. But after all, no two individuals are cast in exactly the same mold, and it is only the small mind that gives undue significance to the angularities of human nature. Blanche Fletcher Rhodes was a woman whose real self did not lie open and exposed. The superficial foibles had to be pushed away in order to get a glimpse of the superior qualities underneath. In other words, you had to know and understand her in order to pass correct judgments. Those who did not know her intimately were in no position to appreciate her or do justice in the portrayal of her character.

"I have known the deceased since she was a small girl, and have had the opportunity of observing her at close range for fifteen years. She and the late Mrs.

Hayes were inseparable friends and our home was her home. These years of constant love, afforded an opportunity to know something of the soul of her in honor to whose memory we have met here today.

"Blanche Fletcher Rhodes possessed an indomitable will. Nothing on this earth could daunt her. Difficulties might arise and friends might persuade, but if her mind were ever set on the attainment of a given object, nothing in this world could deflect her from the course mapped out. It is conceded by all that will-power is one of the most important elements in one's moral equipment, and no one who knew her at all will deny that Blanche Fletcher Rhodes possessed it in large measure.

"Blanche Fletcher Rhodes was a woman of courage. She met the supreme test without flinching. She went under the knife unafraid and she went forth to her death without displaying the slightest sign of cowardice. When she told the surgeon she was ready for the operation, she meant she was ready for whatever might follow. The high courage exhibited by her when face to face with the most serious crisis in her life, made a profound impression upon her father who is himself facing an ordeal of like nature. Dr. Powell remarked to me that after witnessing the fortitude and bravery of his daughter under that severe test, he was prepared to face whatever might be in store for him.

"Blanche Fletcher Rhodes was industrious and ambitious. She had cultivated the talent for misery to the *nth* degree. She was never satisfied with present at-

tainments. She had worked hard to earn promotions and was working for still another promotion when overtaken by this fatal illness. She was pursuing a course to become a teacher clerk and would have finished the same this June coming. She had taken six Regents and ten class subjects last month. If you will allow the homely phrase, there was not a lazy bone in Blanche. She delighted in work whether at home, in the office, or elsewhere. Bubbling over with energy, she did not allow it to go to waste, but harnessed it and made it serve useful ends. Possessing initiative, she did not wait for opportunities to knock at her door, but went forth in search of them. Doors opened for her because of her insistent knocking.

"Blanche Fletcher Rhodes possessed a deep religious experience. Brought up in a Christian home, she gave her heart to Christ when but a small child and learned the beauty and power of the Christian life as she progressed in years. She may not have been as communicative on the subject as some might have wished, but the experience was there just the same. And after all, religion, upon final analysis, is a very personal thing—a matter between the soul and its God. The form of its expressions is relatively unimportant; the experience is the essential thing. Blanche would often express her religious feelings in song, for she was fond of music. The members of Abyssinia can picture her today singing, 'His Eye Is on the Sparrow,' and can see men and women marching down the aisles to join the church under the inspiration of that song.

"But the strongest proof, if additional proof were needed of the depth of her religious experience, is seen in her anxiety for the conversion of her husband. She wanted Mr. Rhodes to become a Christian. She appreciated all his commendable qualities, but felt that he lacked the one thing, the supreme thing—Christianity. So anxious was she about this important matter, that she made this prophecy just before she closed her eyes: 'Gene is going to become a Christian. Oh, yes, Gene is going to become a Christian!' God grant that it may be fulfilled at an early date.

"It seems hard to believe that we shall have Blanche with us no more. She is taken from us in the morning of life with the dew of youth still upon her. Her going is in the nature of a tragedy. She had so much to live for—a bright, promising daughter, a devoted husband, mother and father in whom she delighted and a possible career of wide usefulness. She herself wanted to live and told the operating surgeon as much. But not all the skill of the surgeon nor the prayers of anxious friends could prolong her life. What is the answer? We have none, and unless God speaks we shall be left in a maze of perplexity and doubt. We recall an incident in the life of our Master in connection with which these words were uttered: 'What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.' We also recall those revealing words of Paul: 'We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.' Standing within the shadow of a deep tragedy like this, it may be hard for us to summon

faith to our side. But we are confronted with one of two choices, we must either reach out the hand of faith and grasp the hand of the Invisible God, or else we must boldly challenge the integrity of God. To do the latter is to throw the soul out upon uncharted seas, without rudder or compass, while to do the former is to span the dark cloud of sorrow with the rainbow of promise. Yes, God still lives and loves. His hand is still at the wheel. He is still watching the sparrow, and I know He watches me. Things may appear mysterious at times, but faith speaks and tells me that I shall understand after a while.

> Not now, but in the coming years,
> It may be in the better land;
> We'll read the meaning of our tears;
> And there sometime we'll understand.

"It may be that Blanche was taken from us in order that we might see and appreciate more fully those superior qualities of soul buried deep beneath the surface. Sometimes death alone can bring one's true character into the light of day. I think of these lines from Shakespeare, 'For it so falls out, that what we have we prize not to the work, whilst we enjoy it, but being lack'd and lost, why, then we lack the value. Then we find the virtue, that possession would not show us whilst it was ours.' Today we see Blanche strong in life, brave in sickness and unconquerable in death.

"Cheer up, friends; you went as far on the journey with her as you could go. You went to the mouth of the tunnel but there you had to stop. Another friend

met her at the mouth of the tunnel, and conducted her through the darkness to the other side, where the light of eternal day breaks upon her soul."

> There is no death; what seems so is but transition,
> This life of mortal breath is but the suburb of the life elysian,
> Whose portal we call death.

In an editorial entitled "Mrs. Blanche Powell Rhodes" and published in the *Advance*, Mr. Dixon wrote:

"So swiftly do the years come and go that it seems but yesterday a little girl was brought by Dr. and Mrs. A. Clayton Powell to Abyssinia. She was dressed, as we remember, in a simple but dainty frock and two golden curls fell down her back. This little girl grew, indeed, to womanhood and became an honored matron, but to us who are old and growing old, she was always Blanche. If, in addressing her, we prefixed 'Mrs.' to her name, deep within our subconscious selves she was still Blanche. How could she be otherwise to her elders who watched her childhood blossom into maidenhood and her maidenhood bloom into womanhood? And was she not, in a larger sense, just as truly a child of Abyssinia as she was the child of her parents? If she had lived ever so much longer, to us she would have been ever a child.

"About this Abyssinian child, then, we would speak. Coming as she did from a home where love wrought its work early, tenderly, carefully and having given her heart to Christ under the gentle influence of father

and mother at an earlier period, she took her place with our children in the Sunday School. She grew and learned rapidly. After high school days she taught a class of girls. Curiously enough she was not much older than the youngest one of them and they too called her Blanche. Few, even of those who knew her best, knew how definite, how real, how constructive and truly big is the contribution she made to girl life of Abyssinia through this class.

"She brought, to be sure, an exuberant, playful spirit to her girls and this she merged with that she found in her pupils. But she brought more. She brought to them an understanding of girl life which many older teachers would do well to acquire. She discovered what most teachers of girls do not know: That girls come primarily and solely to Sunday School to meet their friends and to enjoy themselves. She discovered also that the teacher is most likely to obtain the best results, if she organizes her class first and last for enjoyment; that she teaches most, if what she teaches is enjoyed; and that the best organization for girls is the club. Thus she began with her class and laid the foundation, unknowingly, for the organization of the various girls' clubs in our community house. She little thought when she had the girls in her home, when they drank tea and munched nic-nacs; when they chattered as only girls can chatter—she never dreamed that one of her girls would become the first president of the Satellite Club, the oldest and largest girls' club in our church, and that the nucleus of this club would come

from her class. Most of the charter members of the Satellites, in fact, are girls from the club she organized.

"Her greatest legacy, however, to the young folk of this generation is her intrepid, indomitable spirit which urged her ever onward to ceaseless endeavor, to prodigal industry. From high school to business school and from business school to business are the links in the chain of her activities. One would naturally think that these successions would have satisfied her, and especially when it is remembered that, in business, she was a complete success, that her earning power was that of a skillful man rather than that of a woman; but not so with her restless spirit. When it surged within her bosom, she had to attempt greater heights. Despite the onerous duties of home and business, she undertook to get a degree from Hunter College at night. Only the individual who has undertaken such a task can comprehend or appreciate the courage, the dogged determination required. Such an endeavor would be commendable in a man with few obligations. In a woman with husband and home duties, it is almost unthinkable. Blanche started and but for her untimely death, it is a safe guess to say she would have completed.

"Some of us have been permitted to enter the sacred precincts of the home from which she came and to gaze upon the halo with which the love of father, mother, brother and husband enshrouded her. From babyhood to her dying couch, love strove to line her pathway with roses."

"Labor conquers all things" is an old Latin proverb. I know from experience that it conquers sorrow. While I was preaching in St. Paul, Minnesota, the last week in June, 1892, death came into our humble West Virginia home and took mother to join the angels. I was too poor to go to see her during my four years in school. I did not tell my folks where I was going when I left Washington for St. Paul. It was one of the great desires of my life to stop by home on my return from the west and to preach that my mother might know that one of her fifteen children was trying to help make the world better. On arriving at Rendville, Ohio, the first Sunday in July a telegram was given me, stating that my mother would be buried that day. There was no way of continuing my journey. She was buried without my seeing her face. I preached three times that Sunday. I was so busy that I had neither time nor inclination to cry until I retired that night. I survived and conquered that awful sorrow because I was kept busy fighting proverty and other sins.

On that cold, windy day in March, 1926, when we left in Flushing the beautiful house in which Blanche lived for twenty-eight years, my deacons urged me to leave New York for a few days in order to pull myself together. I would have yielded had I not remembered July, 1892, and had I not also recalled the experience of a general and his son who were fighting together in the decisive Battle of Gettysburg. In the thick of the fight the son was shot from his horse. The father dismounted, kissed the hot but dead lips of his

boy goodbye, leaped on his saddle and led the army on to victory which practically ended the Civil War. Blanche and I had walked and worked together, so I kissed goodbye those lips which had brought thirty-seven people to Christ in one night while they sang, "His Eye Is on the Sparrow," and mounted the pulpit the next Sunday and preached with all my God-given physical, mental and spiritual might. I am certain I heard her sing again that Sunday, "I sing because I am happy, I sing because I am free, for His eye is on the sparrow and I know He watches me." There were not many sinners and drifting Christians in the audience that morning who did not come home. Work for others will heal our sorrows and make us forget most of our troubles.

Immediately I began negotiations for the purchase of a home for our aged members. A white stone house at 732 St. Nicholas Avenue, with a frontage of twenty feet and accommodations for seventeen persons, was bought and furnished at a cost of forty thousand dollars. On the day of dedication, July 4, 1926, twenty-six thousand dollars of this amount had been paid, and the remaining fourteen thousand was secured by a mortgage. It is considered one of the finest pieces of property occupied by colored people. All floors are hardwood and the walls of the main floor are trimmed with ivory paint. It has a back porch, a beautifully decorated lawn and a garage. It was uniformly furnished by Wanamaker's furniture department. The city

inspectors pronounced it the best-conducted home for aged people in New York City.

The success of the home for the first twelve years was largely due to the efficiency and affability of the superintendent and matron, Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Jordan. Next to the church and community house this home is the realization of my fondest dream. In recognition of this fact it was named the A. Clayton Powell Home of the Abyssinian Baptist Church. Any aged person, with or without money, who has been a member of the Abyssinian Church for five years is eligible to enter the home for life. Not half of those who have passed through the institution were able to contribute to its maintenance. Despite this fact it always balances its budget.

"The best way to get is to give" is one of the most important lessons I have learned during my long public life. The world is not old enough yet to know the mysterious relationship between giving and receiving. Jesus does not explain this mystery. He simply proclaims it as a fact, "Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over shall men give unto your bosom." John Bunyan says:

> There was a man, some thought he was mad,
> The more he gave away the more he had.

The story is told of a man who listened to an impassioned plea by a missionary for funds to support a gospel station in the foreign field. The auditor at first

was so moved that he decided to give five dollars. Then someone who did not know how to ask for an offering made the appeal, and he reduced the amount he intended to give to one dollar. By the time the ushers passed the plates, his ardor was registering close to zero and he gave twenty-five cents. His path homeward led through a cluster of trees. To get out of a shower of rain he crawled into a blown-down hollow tree. It rained so long that he went to sleep. When he woke, to his consternation the hole in the tree had grown so small that it was less than an inch in diameter. As he looked at that hole, wondering how he would get out, it reminded him of his littleness of giving the quarter instead of the intended five dollars, and he shriveled up and crawled out. This is fiction, but it represents an indisputable fact. Withholding our talents and means always dwarfs and impoverishes us, while the giving of our faculties and facilities never fails to enlarge and enrich us.

When the Abyssinian Church lived for itself, there was a life-and-death struggle every week to raise one hundred dollars. When it began to live for others, the pastor and trustees found it an easy matter to raise a thousand dollars a week. When our church debt was heaviest and hardest to carry in 40th St., we did two daring and seemingly dangerous things.

First, we organized a Highway and Hedges Society, headed by such women as Mrs. Ellen M. Decker, Mrs. Annie Clark, Mrs. Ada Lockett and Mrs. Mattie F. Powell. We offered to feed and clothe every neglected

child in that sin-cursed community. When that offer was made, we did not have a cent in the treasury, but if from that day there was a child in that section who did not have its needs supplied, it was because these faithful women could not find it.

Second, we sent Mrs. Laura M. Bayne, a trained nurse of our church, as the Abyssinian missionary to French Congo, Africa. The night she was unanimously elected by the church with a promise that we would pay her expenses going and coming and her salary while there, we did not have ten dollars in the foreign-mission fund. By sailing time, she had more supplies than she could carry and money to pay her fare over and back. We passed the plates twice a month after the regular offering and always received more than enough to pay her salary.

From then until now we have kept one or two missionaries in Africa and have paid their salaries promptly and easily by the method mentioned. Our annual offering for foreign missions is never less than one thousand dollars. Through the National Baptist Foreign Mission Board, we have supported such missionaries as Miss Sarah C. Williamson, Miss Ruth Morris and Mrs. Mattie May Davis.

While we were paying off a sixty thousand dollar mortgage, we donated more than one thousand dollars to the building of the Medical Center in New York City and two thousand dollars to Virginia Union University; and we joined with Fisk University in raising about four thousand dollars in a campaign

which was held in our church. The annual reports of the National Training School for Women and Girls at Washington will show that Abyssinian led the churches of America every year in contributions to that institution. In the Tuskegee-Hampton Endowment Fund Drive the Abyssinian Church was among the leading donors. No church was allowed to buy or build in Harlem without the financial assistance of Abyssinia. We donated the main auditorium to the Little Mt. Zion Baptist Church during their campaign and helped the pastors and members to place more than three thousand dollars in cash on the table that afternoon. At the same time we were supporting the largest social, religious and educational program ever launched by a colored church.

Our School of Religious Education included teacher training classes, weekday religious education classes and five Bible classes. We were conducting classes in physical education, elementary English, citizenship and our system of government, designing and dressmaking, home nursing, typewriting and shorthand as well as a school of dramatic art directed by Richard B. Harrison of "Green Pastures" fame. There were four clubs for boys and six for girls, a Thursday Community Forum led by Attorney Aaron Smith, a Sunday Evening Community Lyceum presided over by the brilliant attorney, Myrtle B. Anderson, and a Book-A-Month Club conducted by the scholarly Mrs. Lillian A. Alexander.

Socially minded white and colored people were coming from everywhere to see our institution and

hear about its program. They all went away saying that a new day had arrived in Negro church life. Columbia University Extension Division had taken over our teacher training classes. The teachers in that famous university were saying to the students, "If you want to see a social and religious education program in action, go down to the Abyssinian Baptist Church and spend a day and evening. And they came. I talked to as many as two hundred and fifty at one time.

The tide was truly rising, and the relation between the races was becoming more friendly. With this program and the large donations we were making to outside institutions, would you think that we had time to raise money? We did not have to "raise" it. The people showered it on us. If you do not believe that Jesus was uttering one of the most practical truths in the world when he said, "Give and it shall be given unto you," study the financial history of the Abyssinian Church.

You have read in the fifth chapter of this book that to erect and furnish the buildings cost three hundred and thirty-four thousand eight hundred and eighty-one dollars and that all of this amount except sixty thousand dollars had been paid by the close of the dedication services in June, 1923. You also read that the mortgagor, the Dry Dock Savings Bank, gave us twelve years to amortize this mortgage at the rate of five thousand dollars annually. On January 1, 1928, the last dollar of the sixty thousand was paid. This was accomplished in just four and a half years. Dur-

ing that time, as you have already read, we gave thousands of dollars to education and home and foreign missions and paid twenty-six thousand dollars toward the purchasing and furnishing of a home for our aged.

Harlem will never witness another service like the one it witnessed the evening the mortgage papers were burned. Standing there on the white marble pulpit, Mrs. Mary E. Taylor struck the match which her husband, Deacon William H. Taylor, applied to the paper. As the smoke and flames went up from the silver urn, the choirs and the congregation sang, "Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow," with such tremendous volume, that they could be heard a block away. The following is clipped from the *Advance:*

"Wednesday evening, January 11, 1928 will be a memorable day in Abyssinian history until the end of time. Memorable for the multitude that occupied every inch of standing space and for the hundreds who were turned away from every door of the building; memorable for the fine music rendered by senior and junior choirs and the orchestra led by P. B. Watkins; memorable for the great speeches delivered by W. C. Cole, A. Clayton Powell, Sr., Nelson E. Dixon, Attorney Aaron Smith, Alderman Fred R. Moore and George E. Voting; memorable for the great waves of enthusiasm that continuously swept the audience for two hours; memorable as a new world record in church financing among Negroes."

The answer to the question "How did we do it?" was told by the pastor in an address delivered at the mortgage-burning which is here reproduced:

"The story of the erection of the Abyssinian Baptist Church and Community House and the freeing of the buildings of all indebtedness in less than four and a half years after their dedication, has been told so splendidly by the New York Sunday *World* and the *New York Age* that it is only necessary on this auspicious occasion for me to touch the high spots of this unprecedented achievement among Negroes.

"Dr. Clarke, the founder of the World's Christian Endeavor Society, in one of his trips around the world, discovered a heathen monastery way up in the hills of Korea, which was immensely rich and influential. When Dr. Clarke asked for the secret of the institution's greatness, the old chief of the monastery said that 'for three thousand years priests have brought their richest treasuries and best talents and left them here.'

"To know the secret of our financial, moral and spiritual strength, we must go back to June, 1808, when Rev. Thomas Paul came down from Boston to New York and organized a group of men and women who called themselves the Abyssinian Baptist Church. Under the leadership of this first pastor, property was bought in Worth Street which sold a few years later for three thousand dollars. Each of the succeeding pastors, like the priests in the old monastery, not only

added to this sum but to the numerical strength of the membership until William Spelman in 1856 purchased a church building in Waverly Place.

"At the close of his ministry of twenty-seven years, he was succeeded by Robert D. Wynne. During Dr. Wynne's sixteen years of faithful service, the Waverly Place church building was freed from all indebtedness.

"Dr. Charles S. Morris was then called to the church and under his brilliant leadership the Waverly Place building was sold, and a part of the proceeds used to make the first payment on a church edifice and an apartment house in 40th Street.

"The present administration began December 30, 1908, about a century after the church was organized. On that evening, nineteen years ago, the present pastor became heir to the financial, moral and spiritual progress made by Abyssinia for one hundred years under the leadership of sixteen noble ministers of God. He began to preach and dream about a model church in Harlem. The first twelve years of his ministry were devoted to spiritualizing and reorganizing the congregation.

"In the spring of 1920 the lots on which these buildings stand were purchased. That summer and the next they were consecrated by two Evangelistic Tent Meetings. At the close of the first Tent Meeting a Tithing Campaign was started in which nearly two thousand people pledged to give one tenth of their weekly earnings. The remarkable thing about this campaign

was that ninety-five percent of the pledges made were kept.

"This loyalty made it possible on April 9, 1922, the anniversary of Lee's surrender at Appomattox, to break ground and begin the work of construction. Within fourteen months these buildings were completed and furnished at a cost of three hundred thirty four thousand eight hundred eighty one dollars and eighty-six cents. On June 17, 1923, they were dedicated to the worship of God and services of humanity.

"On the day of dedication sixty thousand dollars was needed to meet all outstanding obligations. The Dry Dock Savings Bank let us have this amount and placed a mortgage upon the buildings, giving us twelve years to pay the loan at the rate of five thousand dollars a year. Instead of worrying along with the debt for twelve years we paid it in just four years and five months.

"This big sum of money was raised without entertainments or rallies. The church had two entertainments at Manhattan Casino, and the various auxiliaries and clubs gave entertainments in our homes and the lecture room of the church, but all the proceeds from these were designated for other purposes. Not a ticket or a dish of ice cream was sold to pay for the erection of Abyssinian Baptist Church and Community House. Every dollar of the money was brought in through tithes and offerings, and God fulfilled His promise by pouring out a blessing upon us that our souls were not able to contain.

"This is the time and place to express sincere gratitude to our white friends who gave us about eighteen thousand dollars in response to letters of appeal sent through the mail and published by the newspapers.

"This leads me to say also that publicity played a prominent part in the cancellation of our obligations on this property. We are indebted to the *New York World*, *Times*, *Tribune*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Harper's Monthly*, the *Crisis*, *Amsterdam News*, *New York News*, the *New York Age* and other publications which carried our appeal and kept our program before the public.

"This publicity by the press has done more than most of us think to give us the great crowds which flock to our church and community house. The *New York Age* has not only favored us with many front page articles, but its editor, Alderman Fred R. Moore, has given fifty two dollars a year for four years, to help pay the debt and to carry on our work.

"To fail to mention the honesty and efficiency of this administration would be to overlook two of the chief reasons for our church's tremendous financial success. No church in the world has a more honest set of officers, and it is a question whether any church ever had a more capable Building Committee. Nelson E. Dixon, W. C. Cole and William H. Marlow handled three hundred thirty four thousand eight hundred eighty one dollars and eighty-six cents, and one of the world's leading houses of certified accountants examines our books every year and has never

been able to find that a single penny went in the wrong direction. There are a very few business institutions in the world with such a record of honesty and efficiency.

"The last and greatest element in this marvelous achievement was Prayer. From the hour we conceived the idea of giving Harlem and the world these buildings until the last dollar was paid, every act was predicated upon the unshaken belief that God hears and answers prayer. We never had a committee meeting without prayer. There were meetings when we did not talk to each other, but when every man talked to God telling Him, 'except the Lord build the House, they labor in vain that build it.' We not only prayed ourselves, but we asked the church to go on its knees when doors were closed against us and everytime we prayed the doors were opened. Had the members of the congregation known how near we were, more than once to the awful verge of failure they would have lost heart and ceased to give. But we told no one but the God who said, 'Ask and it shall be given; seek and ye shall find.'

"How did we do it? First, by the help of all the pastors and members who preceded us; second, by organization, business efficiency and downright honesty as stewards of God; third, by following the Lord's method of tithes and offerings; fourth, by effectual, fervent prayer.

"Tonight, with hearts of gratitude, we pass the Abyssinian Baptist Church edifice and Community

House on to you and to unborn generations, free of all indebtedness, stained with the most fervent prayers of our souls, watered with the most sacred tears of our bodies and the best blood of our hearts, unsullied by a single act of dishonesty and undishonored by a single selfish motive."

Chapter 8

THE FLOOD TIDE

There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat,
And we must take the current when it serves
Or lose our ventures.

Shakespeare

ON Sunday, January 15, 1928, just three days after the mortgage-burning, I spoke on "Progress—the Law of Life." Excerpts from that sermon will make the best introduction to this chapter. They are as follows:

"Inactivity means death. Activity means life. To live we must go forward. To go backward always spells death. Here is a new incentive to work. According to this law of life we must work physically, mentally, morally and spiritually in self-defense. In the language of Jesus we must 'lose our lives in service to find them.' It is not use but disuse that kills. When we cease to use our bodies, our muscles become flabby and our sinews soft. When we cease to apply our

minds to reading and study, we become imbeciles, mental nobodies and empty sapheads. When we fail to practice the highest moral standards known to us, we become loose in our actions and conduct and finally drift into moral bankruptcy. When we cease to pray, read the Bible and other devotional literature and to do with all our might 'whatsoever our hands find to do,' the love and light of God leave our souls and we find ourselves like automobiles along the roadside with exhausted batteries.

"Activity and progress are the only cure for ease and the only method of escaping death. Work is the only remedy for physical, mental, moral and spiritual ease. Are you weak physically? Go to work and you will get physical strength. Are you weak morally? Begin practising the highest moral standards known to civilization and you will find yourself gaining in character every day. Are you mentally weak? Go to reading the best books and thinking the best thoughts, and you will find your mind strong enough to grapple with and overcome the complex and perplexing problems that face you. Are you spiritually weak? Find your praying place, morning, noon and night. Tackle any work for God and humanity in the community and 'let your light shine everywhere that men may see your good works' and you will find yourself becoming strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 'Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion' and 'speak to the children of Israel that they go forward.'

"This is the day to sound these words in the ears

and hearts of the members of the Abyssinian Baptist Church. We don't need them next week or next year, but we need them today. This is the day of salvation. There never was such a danger of folding our arms and sitting down at ease in Zion as there is this morning. It is so easy for us now that we are free of debt to stretch out and slumber and sleep like the five foolish virgins until our lights go out. It is so easy for us now to take our talents and bury them in forgetfulness like the unprofitable servant. It is almost natural and reasonable for us, after years of struggle and toil, to sit down under our own vine and fig tree for a breathing spell and exclaim with the fool in the parable, 'Soul, take thine ease.'

"But I have come to tell you that if we are going to live, we must go forward in a larger service of prayer and preaching, in a larger service of personal evangelism, of religious education and of foreign missions. We have done well along these lines, but now that we are free we must do infinitely bigger and better things.

"It was marvelous that with our heavy burden of building we could send Mrs. Laura Bayne to French Congo, Africa, for four years and keep her salary paid most of the time in advance. But we must not only send her back there now or to some other place in the foreign field, but we ought to support another missionary.

"We have done well in the field of religious education. The Abyssinian Baptist Church is the pioneer

among Negroes in this field. Religious education was hardly heard of among Negroes until Mr. Horatio S. Hill came down from Yale four years ago and organized classes in Abyssinian; the only church among colored folks that has such a director. There ought to be one hundred Negro churches with directors of religious education.

"These directors must be thoroughly prepared, and they ought to be prepared in colored schools, but there is no colored school with an instructor in religious education. Abyssinian should establish a chair of religious education at Virginia Union University. It would cost about two thousand dollars a year.

"And then we ought to provide a religious educational scholarship fund of another two thousand dollars, to be equally divided among four young men and women of our church who desire religious training, but cannot afford to meet the full cost of the same. This chair and scholarship fund ought to be perpetual, and to make it perpetual I would suggest that we start a religious educational endowment fund of one hundred thousand dollars to be invested in gilt-edge securities that will yield at least six per cent. This would give us an income of six thousand dollars a year—the amount needed for the support of the educational program.

"Now this all sounds big and even awful to minds without a vision, but let me tell you how simply a one hundred thousand dollars endowment fund can be raised by telling you what I have planned to do. I have already made over to the Old Folks Home a one

thousand dollar paid-up policy in the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. I am carrying another policy of the same amount and I am going to leave that policy to the religious education endowment fund, if the church will create such a fund. I have other insurances amounting to about three hundred and fifty dollars, and I have arranged with my wife not to spend a single cent over three hundred and fifty dollars with any undertaker when I die. This three hundred and fifty dollars must include embalming, casket, box, opening of the grave, hearse and two limousines.

"The members of our congregation are foolishly putting at least fifty thousand dollars under the ground every year when twenty-five thousand dollars is more than enough to bury with our dead. Let us cut our funeral expenses in half and put the other twenty-five thousand dollars into a religious educational endowment fund and in four years we will have the one hundred thousand dollars. This will lift the race and bring the Kingdom of God to the earth instead of burying our money under the earth where it does not do any good whatsoever. We spend more money on the dead than any other race in the world.

"It was my privilege to attend the funeral services of Cornelius Wolfkin at the Park Avenue Baptist Church a few days ago. The whole service was characterized by divine simplicity and lasted only one hour. The body of the pastor of one of the richest, if not the richest, Baptist church in the world was buried in a wooden casket. Here was a man who was known around

the world for the great contribution he had made to civilization, and less than a half hour was used in eulogizing him and his body was laid to rest in a modest casket.

"Many of our people who are not well known even in the block in which they live are brought to the church at 8:30 P.M. and we spend from then until midnight talking about them and performing a lot of foolish ceremonies. And nearly every Negro who has a one thousand dollar life insurance policy must be buried in a metallic coffin or one that looks like metal.

"I do not want a metal coffin for two reasons: first, because it is a sin to put that much money under the earth; second, because I might have some trouble getting out of that metal box when the trumpet sounds.

"As Negroes we ought to learn many lessons from the Jews and one of the most important is the financial modesty which characterizes the funerals of that rich race. The New York Jews alone can buy all the Negroes in America and have enough money left to live several years without working, but if you ever attended a funeral service of a member of this race, you know that they bury a very little money under the ground.

"A story is told of three clergymen and a rabbi who became very warm friends. The fellowship of this quartet was so sweet that one of its members suggested that they should make some very unusual gesture when the first one died. After discussing many plans it was decided that the three surviving members of this

ministerial quartet would place one thousand dollars each in the casket of the first one that passed away. The Baptist preacher happened to be the first one to go to heaven. When the casket was opened at the cemetery, the Catholic priest walked up and placed one thousand dollars in greenbacks in the casket of his dead comrade. The Presbyterian clergyman did the same thing. The rabbi pulled out his book, wrote a check for three thousand dollars, dropped it in the casket, took out the two thousand dollars in cash and pushed it in his pocket. Of course the check never went to the bank to be collected, for it was buried with the body of the Baptist minister.

"This rabbi was exactly right. He was exhibiting the good financial sense that has made the Jews the strong race they are today.

"There is very little difference between burying two thousand dollars in greenbacks and two thousand dollars in the form of a casket. Most of these big funerals we have are simply to show off. We do more showing off at funerals than we do on any other occasion of our lives. It seems that every member of our race is trying to have a bigger and a more costly funeral than the other, whether the undertaker ever gets paid or not.

"Extravagance is the outstanding sin of the members of our race. We eat too much, drink too much, sleep too much, frolic too much, talk too much, show off too much and bury too much money in the graveyards.

"American colored people have wasted enough

money in show-off funerals in the last fifty years to build and stock a department store as large as Wanamaker's in every city in the United States where there are fifty thousand Negroes, and then have enough money left to pay the salaries of a thousand Negro clerks for one year."

My stand against burying too much money under the ground was made the subject of a long article in the New York Sunday *World* and it was endorsed generally by the Negro press and people. George Schuyler, the noted columnist and author, wrote this commendation in the *Pittsburgh Courier:*

"Rev. A. Clayton Powell, pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church, New York City, is perfectly sound when he advises Negroes to quit wasting so much money on funerals. Says he, 'American Negroes have wasted enough money in show off funerals in the last fifty years to build and stock a huge department store in every city in the United States where there are fifty thousand of the race.' Good talk, that. It has always been a puzzle to me why people should pay insurance for fifteen or twenty years and then the entire sum be given to an undertaker and the coffin trust when death comes. Most of these costly funerals are staged solely to show neighbors and friends how much we think of the deceased. Yet it seems to me that a person could bury the deceased in a pine box and still treasure his memory. Expensive caskets are

probably all right for people who can afford them, but the poor ought to die in the style to which they are accustomed. When I die, the folks can put me away in a dry goods box if they want to. I would rather have them use the insurance money to pay the rent and buy some new clothes."

By request the sermon was put in pamphlet form and the first edition of three thousand was hurriedly exhausted. The results were immediate. Hundreds became more modest in the cost and conduct of funerals. The Abyssinian Chair of Religious Education was established at Virginia Union University, September, 1928. Mr. C. H. Pearson became the first instructor in this branch of education among Negroes. That first year he had sixty-three students in his classes, and all the Baptist churches and Bible schools in Richmond, Virginia, felt the influence of his ministry.

The world-wide depression delayed the one hundred thousand dollar endowment fund, but for five years we paid two thousand dollars annually to the support of the Chair of Religious Education and helped to educate from one to two students each year. Miss Ruth Morris, the daughter of my predecessor, whom we had assisted in her education at the Nyack Missionary Training School became our second missionary to Africa and began work at the Suehn Industrial Mission, Liberia.

During the year 1928 we raised for foreign missions three thousand and sixty-six dollars, which was

the largest sum ever given by a Negro church for carrying the gospel to foreign lands. The total budget for that year was fifty thousand dollars, and the receipts were fifty-nine thousand, six hundred seventy-eight dollars and fifty-three cents.

In January, 1928, I was notified that the Harmon Foundation had granted me a bronze award with a one hundred dollar honorarium for notable achievement in religious service. The letter of notification from a member of the Harmon family stated that the committee on award found Abyssinia the best-organized church among colored people in America, and that no white church had been discovered which excelled it in this respect.

The added prominence given my ministry by this distinguished recognition moved Rev. W. Willard Monroe, who was then assistant pastor, to remind the Joint Boards that the church had never given me a reception. The officers unanimously accepted his suggestion to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of my pastorate and appointed him chairman of the committee. The huge celebration was held on Tuesday evening, May 14, 1929. More than two thousand people occupied all standing space, and hundreds were turned away. Half of the states in the Union were represented either in person or by letters and telegrams. The audience stood and applauded for three minutes when Deputy Collector Aaron Smith read the following telegram of congratulations from the President of the United States:

I congratulate the Rev. Dr. A. Clayton Powell upon his long and consecutive service in the Abyssinian Church and Community House and wish for him and his co-workers still further achievements in benefiting the congregation and other charges committed to their care.

HERBERT HOOVER

The church, through the Joint Boards, presented me with two thousand dollars, a hundred dollars for every year I had been its leader. Every auxiliary and club of the church substantially remembered me. Such outstanding citizens as the Honorable Charles H. Tuttle, United States District Attorney; ex-Congressman Martin Ansoarge; Frank B. Bowers, Collector of Internal Revenue, Second District; Watt Terry; Dr. Louis T. Wright, Police Surgeon and Dr. Charles H. Roberts were represented. The following Saturday Nelson E. Dixon said editorially in the *Advance:*

"Magnificent, pompous and marvelous was the original pageant which was written and directed by Rev. W. W. Monroe in commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of Rev. A. Clayton Powell's pastorate of Abyssinian.

"Much can be said and written about this grand celebration, but we will quote here from the foreword of the program:

'"The Pageant of Honor" is an episode in pantomime pageantry and drama built around the most significant events in the life of Dr. and Mrs. A. Clayton Powell.

'This pageant was arranged by the assistant pastor,

Rev. W. W. Monroe, as a fitting climax to the twenty years of noble, inspiring and sacrificial service of Abyssinian's honored and treasured leaders, Dr. A. Clayton Powell and his winsome companion in the Gospel, Mrs. Mattie Fletcher Powell.'

"The action of the Pageant was set in New York City, starting twenty years ago from a church meeting in the old Fortieth Street Church at which division ran high. The audience greatly enjoyed this scene as the members of the old church really carried the minds of the people back over a score of years ago.

"After this each auxiliary rendered a scene interpreting some phase of the church's development under the pastorate of Dr. Powell. The great and beautiful pageant ended with a coronation scene at which time tribute was paid to the great leader of the flock.

"Here we wish to congratulate our hard working, energetic and efficient assistant pastor for his remarkable work in bringing to pass this stupendous presentation. Everyone marvelled at his success in handling this great affair as it meant much imagination, foresight and energy to reap the success that crowned the climax of that never-to-be-forgotten night.

"Loud were the people in their praise for the great work of Rev. Monroe who was responsible for that great celebration."

I wish to place on record here my hearty approval of this editorial and especially of the words, "our hard working, energetic and efficient assistant pastor." The

Rev. Mr. Monroe was associated with me for three years at Abyssinian Church and I have never known a more hard-working servant in kingdom building. I did not hear him complain three times of being tired. He knows the social program as very few men know it. He is hard to equal in the execution of this program and in the conduct of funerals. He bubbles over with information on everything, for there are few men of his years who have read as many books. He has the marvelous faculty of making practical what he reads. Apropos of this thought I quote again from the *Advance* editorial, "When one man can get every officer, club and fifty-two auxiliaries to work harmoniously together with one aim, that man has not only a great idea but power as well."

Half of the two thousand dollars given me at the reception was donated to the Chair of Religious Education and the one hundred dollars from the Harmon Foundation was equally divided between Virginia Union University and the National Training School for Women and Girls.

The Harmon Award multiplied my invitations to preach and lecture at colleges and white churches. I am far from being a scholar, but I have always felt happiest as a speaker when talking to students. I lectured a week at Virginia Seminary and College, delivered two courses of lectures of a week each and the Baccalaureate sermon at Virginia Union University, six lectures at North Carolina State College for Negroes, the Baccalaureate sermon to the West Vir-

ginia State College and followed this with a course of lectures at the Summer School. I lectured a week at Fisk University Summer Conference, a week at Hampton Summer Conference and gave two lectures to the student body the following winter, preached twice at Howard University and delivered the Baccalaureate sermon at Shaw University; delivered two Commencement Addresses at the National Training School for Women and Girls, spoke on "Mob Rule—Its Cause and Cure" at the City College of New York and lectured for three consecutive years on "Race Relations" at Colgate University.

I am not strong on "Negro rights." * In my lectures at Colgate and in my talks to white people everywhere for the past twenty-five years, I have only asked for one right for my race, namely, the right of equal opportunity with all other American people. The hour has struck for us to stop abusing white people and squawking about "Negro rights." The only thing we need and the only thing we deserve is a chance to make ourselves men and women.

Two little ugly ill-clad black boys were standing on the platform of a southern railroad station when an express train rolled in. The throbbing, massive engine made a tremendous appeal to their imagination. One boy said, "I wish I was a white man so I could run that thing like he runs it." The other little fellow said, "If

* Many of the thoughts in this chapter were originally expressed by me in an article published in *Home and Foreign Fields,* the Missionary Journal of the Southern Baptist Convention (white), June, 1930.

the white man will only give me a chance, I will run it, as black as I am." The latter boy tells us how the white man can help every sensible, ambitious Negro to help himself. The self-respecting Negro is not asking for charity, but he is asking for a chance to help himself.

The white people, north and south, have been very generous in their financial contributions to Negro schools, churches and social agencies. The colored people would have been woefully ignorant today had it not been for the millions contributed by these good friends for the mental development of the race. There are only two worth-while educational institutions in America receiving their chief financial support from Negroes. One of these is living just beyond the poverty line and the other is dying slowly. Hampton, Tuskegee, Spellman, Morehouse, Fisk, Virginia, Union and all the healthy colleges and schools of the southland represent the generosity of the white man.

While we give our white friends a unanimous vote of thanks, this kind of charity should not and cannot go on forever. It is bad for the white man and worse for the Negro. The Negroes of this generation are not asking for more financial help; they are pleading for opportunities to help themselves. Like our little black brother, they are saying, "Give us a chance and we will run this engine two or three generations hence."

Perhaps there is not a man living who knows the desires, ambitions and aspirations of the Negro better than I do. For seventy-three years I have lived with

them in log cabins, shanties, oxcarts, mule wagons, on bicycles and in automobiles. For twenty-nine years I was with them as a leader in the largest and most congested Negro center on earth. For fifteen years I administered to at least six thousand Negroes every week. The fourteen thousand members of the Abyssinian Church represent the most intellectual and the most ignorant—the richest and the poorest of my race.

I am therefore speaking with authority which comes from long years of the most intimate contact, south and north, when I say that Negroes want equality; nothing else will satisfy them and nothing else will help them to help themselves out of their present low estate.

By equality I do not mean that bugaboo of "social equality" which is constantly played up by politicians and too often by the press and pulpit. This pernicious doctrine has perhaps done more than any other one thing to keep the Negro from rising and to hamper him in every phase of progress.

When a Negro applies for admission to a university where white students predominate, it is said that he is seeking "social equality." When he attempts to move into a decent neighborhood, he is checked by the argument of "social equality." When he applies for a position (beyond that of elevator boy, porter or butler) for which he is qualified by experience and education, he is stopped by the "social equality" wall. When he tries to secure a Pullman ticket or a stateroom on a ship that he may rest comfortably, he is refused it on the ground of "social equality." When he seeks a political appoint-

ment in the state and federal governments the papers and politicians raise a howl about "social equality."

When nine thousand nine hundred and ninety nine Negroes out of ten thousand plead for equality, the thought of association with white women does not cross their minds. What they really desire and what they are contending for is *equality of opportunity* in the struggle of life. They want *equality of living conditions.* They want a decent place in which to live and rear their children.

Negro communities are woefully neglected by city governments. Ashes, rubbish, garbage, dead cats and dogs are allowed to remain on the streets for days and often for weeks. No man can retain his self-respect in such an environment. And even the white section of such a city cannot be healthy when the laws of sanitation are thus flagrantly neglected in the colored community.

Negroes are a gregarious people. Other things being equal, they would rather live in communities by themselves than to be scattered over wide areas. Let white landlords keep in good repair the houses in which Negroes live, and let the white city officials keep the streets clean in Negro communities and there will be no more riots and bloodshed as in Chicago, St. Louis and Detroit, caused by colored people seeking better living quarters.

Negroes want the same educational opportunities that other groups have in America. Where long prac-

tice has made it a rule to segregate Negroes in schools, it has been found that these schools are inferior in every respect to the schools provided for white pupils. If we are going to help the Negro to make the best of himself, these segregated schools must have equally prepared instructors, the same curriculum and appropriations for their maintenance. It is not the separate school that the Negro objects to, but the separate *inferior school.*

If we ever expect the Negroes to reach the place where they will shoulder their own burdens and carry them like men, we must give them an equal opportunity with other American groups to improve their economic status. Negroes should not forever be forced to remain Pullman porters and firemen if they are qualified by experience and education to become conductors and engineers. No man wants to run an elevator for twenty years if he has fitted himself by training to fill a better position. The graduates of Tuskegee, Hampton and other trade schools should not be compelled to do unskilled work simply because they are black.

Color prejudice not only sees that the Negro is confined to unskilled labor, regardless of his qualifications, but it makes sure that he does not receive the same compensation that other men receive for the same work. An employment agency on Sixth Avenue, in New York displayed one day the following notices on its bulletin board:

An elevator boy wanted—Colored; hours 8 A.M. to 8 P.M. daily, $65 per month.
Elevator boy wanted—White; hours 8 A.M. to 7 P.M. daily, $90 per month.

Even in New York it costs an elevator man 365 hours of extra labor and $300 a year to be colored. No one but a black man can feel the degrading influence of this discrimination based absolutely upon color, which carries with it the implication of inferiority with vengeance. This is not the end of the story. The white elevator man in New York pays twenty-five per cent less house rent than the colored elevator man.

Why should a Negro in Christian America be paid one price for his labor and another man a better price for the same work with fewer hours? This custom prevails all over our "land of the free and home of the brave," and in itself is grossly unfair and certainly does not contribute in any way to help the Negro to help himself.

How can the Negro subject to such an unjust wage system ever become financially strong enough to walk alone? If this disparity of wages between white and colored continues, the colored man will never be able to educate his children, build his churches and support his schools. He will continue to be a pauper child living on government relief and a drag on our social order.

It seems to me that a few paragraphs here from "The Rules of the Road," one of my lectures at Colgate, will add clarity and strength to this racial philosophy:

"The white and colored races have not agreed upon very many things, but here is one thing upon which the thinkers and leaders of both races have unanimously agreed: That both races are here in America and that they are going to stay. The colored man was brought here against his will, and he is going to stay here until he is taken away against his will. To talk about getting rid of twelve million Negroes by sending them back to Africa or by colonizing them in Texas is not even good nonsense. It is even more ridiculous for Negroes to think that the white man will leave here and turn this country over to them. The destiny of the white man is inextricably intertwisted with the destiny of the colored man. The white man cannot keep the Negro down without staying down himself. If the white people are to rise to the heights God wants them to reach, they must give the colored people the opportunity to climb with them. Since the two races are here and both are going to remain, the only sensible thing to do is to decide how they can get along with the least friction.

"First let us recognize the fact that each race has its faults. Let's dismiss the idea that everything Negroid is vicious and everything Nordic is virtuous. There are many bad Negroes and there are also many bad white people. I admit there are a few colored men who are such low-down thieves that they would misappropriate a chicken which had the audacity to roost within their reach. I also know a few white people who are such high-up thieves that they would steal a railroad stretching from New York to Boston. I know a few

Negro chauffeurs who are small enough to steal a quart of oil and then I know a few white men who are big enough to try to steal all the oil lands owned by the United States. When we can decide that neither group in America possesses all the devils or all the angels, we have made one step toward the reduction of race friction which produces race riots and turns the wheels of civilization backward toward barbarism.

"In the working out of our misunderstandings, the patience of both races will be taxed to the utmost. We must be patient with the Negro who goes around with a chip on his shoulder and then we must be patient with the white man who is always looking for an opportunity to knock that chip off. We must be patient with those Negroes who hate all white people and with the white people who despise all colored people. Both races should remember that the man who loves is always superior to the man who hates. Race prejudice is the most deadly poison in the world today, and there is just as much of it in the Negro's system as there is in the white man's. It will require years, perhaps centuries to eradicate this poison. 'Time and patience will change the mulberry leaf into silk,' says a Japanese proverb.

"Each race has a contribution to make to the other. My race needs the white man's courage, initiative, punctuality, business acumen and aggressiveness. The white man needs the Negro's meekness, love, forgiving spirit and the emotional religion as expressed in his folk songs.

"When it comes to social mingling, let the men of both races scrupulously observe the rules of the road. Both colored and white men should keep to the right unless invited and urged by the traffic cops of both races to turn to the left.

"May I further suggest that, in the midst of this trying situation, we turn the question of race inferiority and race superiority over to the biologists for about five hundred years. There are several retarded races on earth today and the Negro race in America is one of them. In mental development and industrial progress the Negro people are centuries behind the white people, but it will require hundreds of years to prove that the Negro is naturally inferior to anybody. Give the Negro the same chance for a few centuries that the white man has had for a thousand years and then sit in judgment on him. The Negro has had less than seventy-five years to show what he can do, and the fair minded white people north and south declare that he has wrought miracles of progress during these years. And this progress has been made in an environment which was not always friendly. I am praying that the day will soon come when Negro leaders will cease petitioning legislative bodies for the enactment of laws favorable to my race, and I am also praying that the day will soon come when white leaders will cease placing discriminatory laws upon the statute books of our fair land. We don't want the United States Congress or the state legislatures to make us men, but we want a chance to make ourselves men.

"Sitting before an open fire one night were three men: a spiritualist, a skeptic and a one-legged man. The spiritualist said that he could go to the graveyard and call the name of any individual and that that individual would appear. The skeptic declared that he did not believe it. The spiritualist said, 'Come out to the cemetery and I will convince you.' The one-legged man grabbed his crutches and said, 'I am going, too.' The three made their way to the graveyard half a mile away, through the meadow and up the hill and over the walls of the cemetery. The spiritualist, standing in front of a newly-made grave, made some sort of a magician-like wave with his hand and something in the shape of a man seemingly came up out of the earth. The skeptic did not wait to investigate the thing, but turned his face toward home and went as fast as his feet could carry him. He scaled the wall, raced down the hillside, through the briars and bushes, across the meadow, speeding through the marsh and mud and never stopped until he fell into the door of his house. He jumped up and started to shut the door in a hurry, but the one-legged man cried out, 'Don't you slam that door in my face.' How he got there, I don't know.

"The skeptic represents the white man in the race of civilization. He has outrun the world in discovery, in science, in great commercial enterprises, in education and, in fact, in all lines of progress. The one-legged man represents the American Negro. In the race he is handicapped by inferior schools, by poverty, by color

prejudice and race discrimination of every sort, but despite all these, we do not ask the white man for any special privileges. Like the one-legged man, we only ask that he does not slam any doors in our faces. No fair-minded American will accuse us of demanding too much when we say, 'Let every door of educational, industrial, economic and political opportunity stand open from Mississippi to Maine.' If this is done, then as true as God lives and the earth turns, when the white man reaches the goal of the world's best civilization, the colored man will be tramping on his heels. The American Negro is not asking for any special favor. He only wants fair play, foot way and elbow room."

This philosophy will work if both races will let it. We have tried it at Abyssinian Church for more than a quarter of a century, and it is working. One of the chief objectives of the church is to cultivate a more sympathetic relationship between the races, and I believe that the church has accomplished more in this direction than any other colored institution in America. I heard Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., say, "The reason we do not love each other more is because we do not know each other better."

During my leadership at Abyssinia, I was criticized by some of the members of my race for trying to help all races understand each other better that they might love each other more. To this end we had a Jew on the Usher Board, a German teacher in the Sunday School, a mixed faculty in our Teacher Training School

and, for several years, a white instructor for our Red Cross Nurse Training Classes. There are always white worshipers at our Sunday services. Mr. Clarence V. Howell, Director of Reconciliation Trips, brings two and three groups of the best white people every month to our church to attend services and to study our social, educational and religious program.

In July, 1928, a group of ministers came here from the summer school at Union Theological Seminary as a part of their instruction. In that group was a white preacher from South Carolina and a colored preacher from North Carolina. These two had sat side by side in the class room but had never spoken to each other. The colored preacher told me that if his coat sleeve happened to touch the coat sleeve of the white minister, the white clergyman would move over. When this white man from South Carolina had spent an hour in our church listening to a thirty-minute talk by the pastor on our program, he turned to the colored preacher and said, "After seeing this great institution and hearing about its program, I have concluded that the difference between your race and my race is not so great as I had been taught. If you are ever in my town, drop in on me and let us know each other better."

A group of white social workers and students led by Mr. Howell asked that fifty seats be reserved for them at a Sunday morning service during February, 1929. Twenty-one of them ordered dinner in advance. This dinner is always served in our gymnasium following the morning service for the special benefit of the

people from out of town. This group was so impressed with the morning service that, instead of twenty-one, forty of them went down to the gym and dined with two hundred colored people. A white man from North Carolina said to me after the dinner that he had never attended such an inspiring service in all his life and that he had not had such a good dinner since he left the south. The two hundred colored people had no effect whatsoever upon his appetite.

Mrs. Howell brought forty white women students, social and religious workers, to our church the fourteenth day of March of the same year to learn about our institution. I received a letter written two days later by Mrs. Howell which contains this significant paragraph:

"The ladies from Newark said to me as they were leaving last Saturday evening, 'We have been studying Africa and the Negro problem in the Mission Board's text books all winter, and we felt confident that we knew all there was to know about the problem, but tonight we are quite convinced that we have learned practically nothing all winter in our studies.' "

These incidents which might be multiplied by one hundred show that when we know each other we can get together as races on the things essential to peace, progress and brotherhood. They tell us that "in Jesus Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile, Barbarian nor Scythian." We are all created by one God and out of

one blood. These barriers which have been separating us must go because they are artificial and contrary to the principles of Jesus who prayed for the unity of mankind, and who declared that the second greatest commandment in the world is "Thou shalt love they neighbor as thyself."

Three significant things happened in 1930 which affected the colored people of New York in general and those of Harlem in particular. As we were getting ready for the dedication of our buildings in 1923, the following letter was received from Dean Luther Allan Weigle of Yale University:

"My dear Mr. Powell:

Rev. Laurence Fenninger of Hampton, Virginia has told me about you and your church in answer to my inquiry where a well-trained young colored man might most profitably find employment in the field of religious education. Mr. Fenninger tells me that your church is one of the largest in America and that he knows of no church that could more advantageously employ a well qualified director of religious education.

"The man whom I have in mind is the Reverend Horatio S. Hill who has been for two years a student in the Graduate School of Yale University, specializing under my direction in religious education. He will secure the M. A. degree from this University in June, having presented as his essay a careful study of "The Problem of Religious Education in the Negro

Churches." Mr. Hill is a graduate of Benedict College, South Carolina, and of Oberlin Theological Seminary. He is an ordained Baptist minister and a member of the National Baptist Convention. He entered Yale in the Fall of 1921.

"I have found him to be a man of excellent native ability and a thorough, conscientious worker. He possesses excellent personal qualities, moreover—is tall, well built and at ease socially.

"I believe that you would find him well qualified to undertake the direction of the educational work of your church, through the Sunday School and various clubs or societies for children and young people. In case you are interested in this possibility, I should be very glad to send you complete information concerning him.

With cordial regard, I am

Sincerely yours,

L. A. Weigle"

Solely upon this recommendation Mr. Hill was appointed Director of Religious Education and Community House Activities in June, 1923. He served in this capacity for seven years and justified both in spirit and word Dean Weigle's letter. Mr. Hill attracted the attention of the newspapers, magazines and churches of all races by putting on a religious, educational and social program that has not been equalled by any church. No one church would expect to hold a man of his training and efficiency; therefore in June, 1930, he resigned from Abyssinian to become the educational

director of the Negro Auxiliary of the New York Baptist City Mission Society. He is trying to do now for all the Negro Baptist churches of New York City what he did for the Abyssinian Church, and with a commendable measure of success. Mr. Hill is still Dean of the Teacher Training School he organized at Abyssinia. This school is now run by Columbia University and the Greater New York Federation of Churches.

It is an old but true saying that God always has a man for the hour. The month that Mr. Hill left Abyssinia, A. Clayton Powell, Jr., was graduated from Colgate University and immediately departed on a sixteen thousand mile trip abroad which carried him through all Europe, Egypt and the Holy Land and as far east as Damascus. On his return to America in September he was elected Business Manager of the Abyssinian Church and director of its social and educational program. His life of twenty-two years had been spent in the church, and he not only knew its program but its traditions and aspirations. He at once gathered about him the greatest aggregation of young Christian workers that ever appeared on any church staff. The tide which was at flood when Mr. Hill left continued to flow. The far-reaching significance of this appointment will appear later.

The establishment of a free food kitchen was the third significant event in 1930, and it made more news for the papers than the building of the institution, as will appear in the next chapter. Just after Thanksgiving Day of that year, people began to come to our Re-

lief Bureau, willing to sell their cars, fur coats, jewelry and furniture in order to pay for food and a place to sleep. Day and night I heard the voice of Jesus say, "I was naked and ye clothed me. I was hungry and ye fed me." I preached from the former verse the first Sunday in December, but no relief came to my haunted soul.

I kept praying to God to clothe the naked and feed the poor, but I could not get rid of the words, "*Ye clothed me—ye fed me.*" It dawned on me that I was asking God to do something that God had told me to do nineteen hundred years ago. I decided that week to obey God, and the next Sunday I told the people about this decision. The results were astounding beyond measure. Mr. Frank L. Sullivan, a member of the *Watchman-Examiner* staff was present, and in the issue of that magazine dated December 25, 1930, he gave a fine description of the church, its surroundings and what happened at that service. He said in part:

"Recently I spent a Sunday morning and a Friday evening with the Abyssinian Church, Borough of Manhattan, City of New York. Its commodious house of worship is well located on West 138th Street, near Lenox Avenue, in the great densely populated Harlem district. It is estimated that two hundred twenty thousand colored people live in this district. Abyssinia has on its membership roll nine thousand names, but the pastor claims only seven thousand resident members. While most of them live in this district many are

widely distributed over the metropolitan area and far out on Long Island. It has thirty-two paid workers. It has a senior choir of one hundred voices and junior choir of forty voices. The main auditorium seats nearly two thousand and the prayer meeting room below seats half as many. Usually the auditorium is full and there is an overflow meeting below of five hundred or more. The senior choir leads the congregation above and the junior choir the one below. Dr. A. Clayton Powell has been the beloved and efficient leader of this large flock for twenty-two years. His son, a student at Union Theological Seminary, has been his popular assistant the past year.

"On the Sunday morning I referred to, every seat in the auditorium was taken and a hundred or more were standing against the walls. Nearly one thousand others were taken care of in the hall downstairs. There were eighty in the well balanced choir. The anthem, processional and recessional were all that could be desired. The choir and organist were assisted by a small orchestra in the balcony near the organ. The volume and rich melody of that well trained choir and great congregation in familiar and classic hymns was something for a lover of music to enjoy and long remember.

"But great and satisfactory as was the music, the sermon was plainly the main thing to which that congregation was looking expectantly. Nor did it look in vain. Tall—six feet and more—well built, agile on his feet, in his prime, with bushy grey hair, Dr. Powell held that audience spellbound for thirty minutes, in a

well thought out and well written sermon, like the one recently published in *The Watchman-Examiner*. His subject was 'A Hungry God.' That of a few Sundays before was 'A Naked God.' The reader can easily surmise the texts. No subjects could have been more appropriate to the unemployment situation and none more interesting to that audience.

"The practical climax was reached when the pastor pathetically called for additional contributions to the Unemployment Relief Fund. He set the example by offering four months of his salary. Then he called on all the paid workers of that church to contribute five per cent of their salaries for the next four months. His son quickly responded with a ten per cent a month contribution. Then came the money and pledges thick and fast from all salaried people, and that, too, after two collections had already been taken. It was a great and unusual sight to me."

We did not ask for a third offering on that day, as Mr. Sullivan thought, for our two offerings had been taken before the sermon, as is our custom; but before I could finish the delivery of the sermon, the audience was rushing forward placing money on the table "to feed a hungry God." One woman left her pocketbook containing her week's wages and walked home. The trustees counted in cash and pledges twenty-five hundred dollars, including my thousand dollars. It was the most impressive climax to a sermon I had ever witnessed.

The free food kitchen was opened at once and remained open until Easter Sunday, 1931. The Prosser Committee of blessed memory paid the salaries of all the help except the manager. A. Clayton Powell, Jr., with the assistance of a staff of fifty workers, organized and directed the largest relief bureau ever set up by colored people. According to the secretary, this bureau accomplished the following. The food kitchen served 28,500 free meals, sent out 525 baskets containing 2,125 free dinners, gave away 1,530 pieces of bread and pastry, distributed 17,928 pieces of clothing and two thousand pairs of shoes. This distribution was made possible by the gifts of 2,564 persons and stores. During that terrible winter when workers were being laid off by the thousands, the bureau obtained 633 positions through the Prosser Committee and the church's employment agency. Each Sunday the congregation was asked to report to the agency any jobs it might hear of, and the agency passed the job on to the jobless. Because of this continued co-operation between the church office and the congregation, Abyssinians have not suffered as seriously from the unemployment situation as some others.

The Abyssinian Church furnished headlines for the newspapers again in September, 1932. The Republican State Convention, meeting at Buffalo that month, nominated me presidential elector-at-large to represent the State of New York. This still stands as an unprecedented honor bestowed upon a colored man. Frederick Douglass was once a district elector from the same

state, and in 1932, Dr. Godfrey Nurse was made elector from the 18th Congressional District on the Democratic ticket, but I was the first and only colored man to be nominated elector-at-large of New York State. It was my privilege to address large gatherings all over the north, including the final campaign meeting in Faneuil Hall, Boston.

The people were responsible for the depression, but they blamed Mr. Hoover and buried him beneath an avalanche of Roosevelt ballots. As this book goes to press, he is rising again and looks more like a statesman than any man on earth. I will not burden the reader with newspaper comments on my nomination and political speeches. It is sufficient to publish a magazine editorial and the following letter from the President of the United States:

My dear Dr. Powell:

I share in the gratification felt by the Negro race in the United States by reason of your selection as nominee for Republican elector-at-large for New York State.

This is both a deserved tribute to yourself and a deserved recognition for the valuable participation of the colored race in the discharge of the duties of citizenship.

Yours faithfully,

HERBERT HOOVER

The following editorial appeared in the October, 1932, issue of the *American Business World*, a magazine published in New York City.

"The Republican State Committee has released the information that A. Clayton Powell, pastor of the

Abyssinian Church in Harlem, has been appointed elector-at-large to represent the State of New York in the Electoral College. Total membership of the State consists of forty-three district electors and four electors-at-large. Reverend Powell's selection has aroused wide interest as only men of known eminence are chosen.

"The Electoral College is a curious and interesting institution. The founders of our government placed great importance on the activities of the college and though modern political practice has made its duties purely a matter of form, the honor of the office cannot be denied. Especially is this true in New York State which has the largest number of electors of any State in the nation.

"Reverend Powell has long taken an engrossing interest in the affairs of the Republican party. He is a public spirited citizen in the fullest sense of the term. As pastor of the Abyssinian Church, the largest Negro church in the world, he has done inestimable good for his congregation and the community. He possesses all qualifications of an outstanding religious and social leader. Therefore, it is a pleasure to note the recent honor accorded him by his appointment to the Electoral College."

Although both the letter and editorial were written by white people, they serve to show that my work was held in high regard by both races. I am certain that this is due to the fact that although I have taken an active part in politics since I was twenty-one years old, I have

never accepted a political appointment with a salary, or sold myself for a mess of political pottage.

The alarming collapse of five thousand banks, not to mention other financial institutions, the world-wide shrinkage of securities, the forsaking of the gold standard by the United States, the piling up of an unheard-of national deficit and the devaluation of the American dollar made us feel that fourteen thousand dollars was safer in property than in any bank. Therefore, on July 1, 1933, we cancelled the fourteen thousand dollar mortgage on our Home for the Aged. The burning of those papers made Abyssinian Church the possessor of the most valuable property owned by Negroes in the world, free and clear of debt.

Despite the fact that the earth was suffering from the most acute universal depression in recorded history, both the church and the pastor were "afloat on a full sea." After meeting the salaries of thirty workers and all other obligations, we closed the year 1933 with a balance of $2,146.00. One of the greatest and most damaging fallacies in church history is that we need debts on our churches to keep our members from getting lazy. It is nearer the truth to say that we keep debts on our churches because our members are too lazy to pay them off. In this connection it has almost become a proverb to say, "When a pastor clears a church of debt, it is time for him to clear out." Abyssinia has proved that both of these theories are false and pernicious. The church never reached flood tide in its social, educational and religious work until it cut loose from all financial moorings.

Chapter 9

TIDAL WAVES

As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Oliver Goldsmith

THE reader has already noted that in the summer of 1893, to keep from starving I exchanged a long preacher's coat for a short waiter's jacket and went to work in an Atlantic City hotel. I had about three hours off each afternoon which I spent under the famous boardwalk, reading and resting. One day I was about a hundred and fifty feet from the ocean, sitting on a box, reading a magazine. Suddenly I heard a rush and a roar, and before I could move a wave had knocked me and the box about forty feet nearer the center of the city. Luckily for me there were no supporting boardwalk posts in the direction I was thrown. Several people under the boardwalk on that day were dashed against these pillars and either killed or wounded. This was my first and, I hope, my last experience with a literal tidal wave. This wave gives no

warning and travels at a terrific speed. We have no exact information on its origin. It is popularly believed that it is created by submarine earthquakes, and if this is true, it is wrongly called a tidal wave.

A great and often sudden and unexpected movement in popular feeling is figuratively called a tidal wave. I have had several experiences with them. The thing that made these experiences painful is that they were connected always with an attempt at unselfish leadership. I have never sought an office or tried to lead separately or jointly for purposes of self-aggrandizement. In all my efforts at leadership, I have thought solely of benefiting the masses. "The Elevation of the Masses—the Hope of the Race" was the subject of my graduation oration, and from that day until now it has been my philosophy. Despite this fact, there has always been a rebellion against any attempt I have made at leadership outside of the churches of which I was pastor. In political, social, moral and economic issues, my efforts aroused violent opposition.

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

During my years in Connecticut I discovered that colored people had no political influence in that state. A door-keeper's position in the capitol at Hartford was the only appointment they had received. They had enough votes to swing the election in a close year. The Ninth Ward in New Haven was overwhelmingly colored. Attorney George W. Crawford and I lived in this ward. Mr. Crawford was a Yale man and a lawyer of

unusual ability, and he was regarded by the whole city as a Christian gentleman. Judge Livingston W. Cleveland had recognized his efficiency and influence by appointing him Clerk of the Probate Court. He was satisfied with his position and I was satisfied as pastor of the Immanuel Church. We were the men to put our race on the political map of the state.

The Republicans had just won a closely contested election in the state and we said, "This is the time to make a plea for our race." We prepared a special speech and called on Mr. Isaac Ulman, the titular head of the Republicans of Connecticut.

This millionaire was sitting in his mahogany swivel chair, chewing a twenty-five cent cigar. Lord Chesterfield could not have received us more graciously. After thanking us for helping him win a state victory and after other preliminaries, he said, "Well, gentlemen, what can I do for you?" At this point Mr. Crawford began the delivery of our well-prepared speech. "We have come," he said, "to ask you to give the colored people of Connecticut a larger recognition in the distribution of the political patronage of the state."

This is as far as we ever got with the speech. Mr. Ulman cut it off by saying, "Yes, gentlemen, you are right. There are several good positions, including that of a road commissioner, available, and your race should have one or two of them. Call a mass meeting of the colored citizens, have a committee appointed to come down here with you, and I will see that your race gets anything your mass meeting unanimously agrees

upon." We were two happy men. We had won a political victory for our race and we were going to show the colored voters in the United States how to do things.

The mass meeting was held in the Dixwell Avenue Congregational Church, and a large audience was present. Circulars had announced that the meeting was called to secure more and better political jobs for the colored people of the state. This brought out the real and would-be Negro political leaders. Attorney Crawford was elected Chairman and explained the object of the meeting, placing special emphasis upon the promises Mr. Ulman had made us.

A ward leader who controlled the votes of the underworld and who had been drunk ever since General Lee surrendered at Appomattox was the first to get the floor. He said that he had been political leader in New Haven since the close of the Civil War and that this was the first political meeting ever held in the ward without his approval and help. If we thought we could run the ward without him, just go ahead. Another community keyman wanted to know where we got the money to pay for advertising the meeting.

Before he and others had finished speaking along this line, they had made the crowd believe that we had sold out the colored people of Connecticut to a "Republican millionaire Jew." These opposition speakers further secured the sympathy of the audience by portraying Mr. Crawford as a high-brow from Talladega College and Yale University trying to rise to further

political preferment on the shoulders of New Haven citizens whom he regarded as his inferiors.

The most telling argument with the crowd was that I had disgraced the pulpit and the ministerial cloth by wallowing in the mud of politics. These leaders not only figuratively spanked and kicked us but verbally fought each other over the question of political leadership until the audience was on the verge of nervous prostration. There might have been a fist fight if someone had not started the audience to laughing by saying, "Mr. Chairman, who appointed you gold dust twins to go donwtown to the white folks as our representatives?" The committee was not appointed.

A few days later when I saw Mr. Ulman, he told me that nine different men from that mass meeting had been to see him, each repudiating the leadership of Crawford and Powell and proclaiming himself the leader. The colored people were not given an appointment. When the legislature met at Hartford, the colored doorkeeper was dismissed and the job was given to an Italian.

SOCIAL LEADERSHIP

When the southern migration began to pour thousands of Negroes into Harlem, I was asked by the Colored Baptist State Convention which was holding its session in New Rochelle to tell what the Baptists of Harlem needed most. I made a plea for a great community house that would be used as a religious, social and educational center. I pictured reading and social

rooms for ministers and laymen, classrooms for teacher- and missionary-training and elementary English. I remember saying that one hundred thousand of our people had come to Harlem from the southland and that most of these were too old to enter our public schools and too ignorant to matriculate in our higher institutions of learning, but that an educational center like the one I was pleading for could knock the rough corners off them in a few years, making them desirable and useful citizens. I closed my plea by declaring that a woman of Miss Nannie H. Burrough's vision could make this the greatest adult education center in the United States.

I have never been more vociferously applauded by any convention. My good friend Dr. Charles H. Sears, Secretary of the New York Baptist City Mission Society, was present, and he kindly suggested that I come down to the City Mission rooms and present the facts of my speech to a group of white Baptists who had worth-while financial contacts. I told the Baptist Ministers' Conference about the invitation and suggested that it send a committee along with me. Revs. W. W. Brown, G. H. Sims, W. P. Hayes and I were duly elected, with power to accept any reasonable proposition our white brothers might make.

After these gentlemen listened to a statement of Harlem's needs, they agreed to build a community house and to pay the salary of Miss Burroughs or another director in the event that she could not be secured. At the suggestion of Dr. Sears, this white group

agreed to pay for a banquet where both races could talk over the plans before submitting them to the architect. The committee appointed me to report the good news to the Baptist Ministers' Conference.

I expected that we would be canonized as saints, heroes and benefactors but, believe it or not, we were cannonaded. They could hardly wait for me to finish my report. They called us "The Big Four, The Czars, The Usurpers of Power, The Denominational Wreckers," and said that we had conspired with a certain rich man to destroy the Baptist doctrines and churches. After one brother had delivered a fifteen minute tirade against the community house idea, he asked, "What are a community house, anyway?"

I answered, "A center where the people of a community can have their bodies, minds and souls improved."

"That's what I thought," he said. "We don't want nothin' like that. We want a place where folks can git religion."

There were about one hundred ministers present and all but eight voted not to accept the offer of the white Baptists to give my race a community center. That was in the late fall of 1918 and for eleven years I never made another effort to lead except in the Abyssinian parish.

MORAL LEADERSHIP

On November 3, 1929, I delivered a sermon on "Lifting Up a Standard for the People." This sermon

was intended only for my congregation. Many of my hearers felt that it should be given to the nation, so they urged me to repeat it the following Sunday morning, November 10. Without my knowledge, some of these friends invited several reporters to be present that Sunday. These reporters sent the sermon in part to their papers, and other papers continued to copy until there was perhaps no colored paper in the United States which had not printed excerpts from the sermon or commented upon it.

Within two weeks I found that the papers and many of the people had proclaimed me the leader of the moral forces of the colored people in America. Dean Kelly Miller wrote a syndicated article on "A. Clayton Powell—The Prophet." The last four paragraphs of this article are quoted:

"Judgment must begin at the House of God. The young educated people will no longer follow an immoral and corrupt ministry. The church must purify itself from within or from without. No one will dispute and none can refute the accuracy of the picture here portrayed.

"The time is ripe for the remedy. Loud is the call for the prophet. Now comes A. Clayton Powell, pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church, and engages to bring the Negro ministry back to the mark of the high calling. Big of body, big of brain, brimful of energy and moral courage, he cries aloud to his brethren—'Unless ye repent, the church will perish.'

"There are thousands of young devoted ministers in all denominations who are overawed and intimidated by corruption and arrogance in high places, who are eager to follow a leader in this crusade to purify the church. The right-minded intelligentsia, outside of the clergy, are ready and willing to join in the redemption of the religious estate. There are no other means under heaven whereby the church and the race can be saved.

"All honor to A. Clayton Powell. May his hands be upheld and may his tribe increase until the church shall be redeemed."

The *New York Age* which had led the newspapers in giving nation-wide publicity to the sermon also led them two weeks later in the publishing of favorable comments. Because the *Age* has been my unchanging friend for thirty years and because of the high character of those expressing their approval, the entire article is given a deserved place in this book:

"The sermon preached by the Rev. Dr. A. Clayton Powell, Pastor of Abyssinian Baptist Church, in his pulpit on Sunday morning, November 10, denouncing evils in the pulpits of the churches, particularly with reference to sex degeneracy among certain preachers, struck a chord that has brought expressions of approval and commendation from many sources.

"Aside from the hundreds of personal expressions received, together with a number of letters from per-

sons telling of individual instances of moral sex-perversion of which they had some knowledge, particularly with reference to some of the institutions of learning and of community welfare work attended by large numbers of girls and women, there have come both to Dr. Powell and to the *New York Age* letters of approval from leading churchmen, as well as from prominent leaders in other lines of endeavor.

"In his sermon last Sunday morning at St. James Presbyterian Church, the Rev. Dr. William Lloyd Imes, speaking on 'The Amendments: 13th and 15th,' commended strongly the attack on vice in high places as uttered by Dr. Powell, although not mentioning the Baptist minister by name. Dr. Imes, at the same time, denounced in strong terms the evil conditions which obtain.

"From many sources have come information to Dr. Powell that causes him to realize that he only scratched the surface in his former investigations, and that the evils of moral degeneracy and sex-perversion among both white and colored, men and women, are more deeply rooted than he had realized. Speaking of this phase of the situation, Dr. Powell declared his belief that much of the prevalence of these vicious habits is due to contact and association and not to inherent degeneracy. The seeking for 'thrills' of an unusual character by the modern youth is responsible for some of it, he believes.

"The Rev. Dr. S. N. Vass, secretary, Dept. of Religious Education, National Baptist Sunday School

Publishing Board, Nashville, Tenn., wrote Dr. Powell, under date of November 16, in the following terms:

'I am writing to express my very high appreciation for the powerful philippic which you launched from your pulpit against sin and perversion on the part of ministers and laymen. It was a note that we seldom hear in these days and nobody but one who is thoroughly consecrated will talk from the shoulder as you did. I am very proud of you and I hope sincerely that you may be spared many long years to lead our people along the right lines.'

"A brother minister in the local vicinity, the Rev. J. B. Boddie, pastor of Bethesda Baptist Church, New Rochelle, N. Y., gave his approval and promise of support in the following letter:

'I am glad to send a word of congratulation for the bold stand you take in the pulpit against sin and vice that is prevalent today. I want you to know that in such stand you may always claim me as your friend and brother, praying for your strength and power to stand fast in the place where your mission will be known by all who know and hear of you throughout the whole world.'

"Another strong Baptist figure is the Rev. Benjamin Brawley, editor of The Home Mission College Review, organ of Colleges for Negro Youth Supported by the American Baptist Home Mission Society, with offices at Shaw University, Raleigh, N. C., distinguished both as a pulpit orator and as an author of a

number of successful books, and Dr. Brawley has commended Dr. Powell's utterances by writing:

'Throughout this country of ours, earnest men and women must be grateful to you for your strong sermon last Sunday, report of which I find in "The Age." Our Christian work is in the most perilous situation, and again and again it seems that the very spirit of evil is enthroned in high places. Most fervently do I pray that your words may bear much fruit. Our whole Christian Church needs a new quickening of the spirit—a new exaltation of Christ in the individual life. Let us hope that this may come speedily.'

"One of the best friends among the whites of the Negro in this country is George Foster Peabody, distinguished philanthropist, of New York City and Saratoga Springs, N. Y., whose benefactions to and support of education and welfare movements for benefit of the race are multitudinous. In a letter to Dr. Robert R. Moton, who spoke at Abyssinian Baptist Church on Sunday evening, November 17, Mr. Peabody expressed himself as follows, concerning Dr. Powell's sermon:

'I was much pleased to observe the straightout talk which Dr. Powell gave with such force and emphasis and such good response respecting the purging of the Ministry. I think this outspoken word is the most cheerful sign we have respecting the great advance that has been made among this ten per cent of our population, who have had every conceivable drag put upon their efforts to be, what they naturally incline to, Chris-

tians in spirit and in truth. . . . Please give him my greetings and word of my regret that I cannot be there myself (on November 17) and my warm congratulations on his timely and noble and wisely-put words as to the purity of thought and purpose of ministers.'

"The editor of the *New York Age* is in receipt of a letter from J. Francis Monroe of 150 South 9th Street, Mt. Vernon, N. Y., who expresses his endorsement of Dr. Powell's charges in a letter which reads in part as follows:

'There can be no contradiction to the charges as printed. Every allegation is as true as they are stated. "Heads of church wrong," says the doctor; yes, the average head is wrong in spirit and letter, and there is nothing else to be expected of the body when the average Negro has been trained to respect the pulpit regardless of who or what kind of preacher there may be in that pulpit. . . . It will take men with plenty of good, clean moral principles, backed up with determination to save the world for God, to join Dr. Powell in his attack on these sanctimonious preachers with their professed position of holiness, while their habits are lewd, sottish and debasing. . . . A. Clayton Powell has blazed the way for a pure and undefiled pulpit. Are there any followers?' "

The sermon was not a "broadside fired into the ranks of the ministers and churches" as headlined by many newspapers. It was not even against natural sins among men and women, but abnormal sins. It was the

sin that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, that buried Pompeii alive and wrecked the mighty Roman Empire, that I thundered against that morning. Why did I preach against homosexuality and all manner of sex perversions? Because, as every informed person knows, these sins are on the increase and are threatening to eat the vitals out of America.

Homosexuality is causing men to leave their wives for other men, wives to leave their husbands for other women, and girls to mate with girls instead of marrying. The lives of girls and boys are being blighted before they reach the age of sex understanding. All of these facts were laid bare that Sunday morning and illustrated by cases brought to my attention by deans of boys, matrons of girls, and by these unfortunate people themselves.

I called attention, without calling names, to several preachers who had been publicly accused of abnormal sex practices. Some of these were in prison and some were still in the pulpit. One of these was sent to the penitentiary two weeks after preaching for me. Soon after he was let out of prison, a church with a full knowledge of his sins called him to its pulpit.

This and similar cases led me to say, "The only reason a church keeps a rotten minister is because it is rotten. I do not blame ministers with low ideals for preaching, but I do blame and condemn the churches for keeping them. It is said sympathetically that many men and women are born with a moral twist in their minds and cannot help doing the morally perverse

things of which they are accused. I have as much sympathy as anyone for a liar, thief, sex pervert or libertine, and I would do anything I could to save them from these sins, but I do not believe that a veteran liar or a veteran drunkard, or a libertine, or sex pervert should stand in the pulpit to preach the unadulterated Gospel of the Son of God until he has been thoroughly cleansed and forgiven."

The Monday following the publication of this sermon I looked for a vote of thanks from the Ministers' Conference. There was not a word of comment. The brother whose duty it was to report the news of the week did not mention it although it made the big headlines that week. I did not get the usual cordial handshake. One very familiar friend said as he passed me with a scrutinizing look, "Powell, I thought you had some sense." The tidal wave came, however, the third week in December, and it was more surprising and more fierce than the one which struck me in Atlantic City in 1893.

Can you imagine my feelings on December 21, 1929, when I read the following words in big black headlines across the front page of the Baltimore *Afro-American:* "THREAT OF DEATH SENT TO DR. POWELL FROM ARKANSAS. Abyssinian Church To Be Destroyed."

The article which followed read:

"A letter threatening death to Dr. A. Clayton Powell, pastor of Abyssinian Baptist Church, New

York City, was received by the *Afro-American* this week.

"It was signed by A. M. R. Vanlandingham of Little Rock, Ark., and declared that the assassination of the New York minister will take place somewhere between January 1 and June 13, 1930. The letter reads:

Dec. 13, 1929
Little Rock, Ark.

The Afro-American
Baltimore, Md.

On Friday December 13, 1929 it was voted by the Black death association of Ark., that A. Clayton Powell of New York City is to be kill between January 1, 1930 and June 13, 1930 not later than 6 P. M. Friday.

That between these dates his church are to be destroyed.

We have warn him and people and the Baptist Ministers Union to stay out of his church and from him.

The cause is set forth in a letter to him on this article taken from your paper.

A. M. R. VANLANDINGHAM

On the same date and from the same place this letter was sent the *Afro-American*, one was posted to me. It was the vilest letter I ever read. Omitting lines too vulgar to print, the letter reads:

A spurious cur like you . . . should be thrust down to hell.

You are a true sample of degeneracy.

Your church conducts more immoral houses in New York City than all of the city.

You have not a church that Jesus sit up you have a commercial financial jeer house, we warn your members to stay out if they dont want to be blown to hell.

We warn the ministers whom you hate worst than a man hates a snake to stay out your pulpit.

Because you have this spirit and non of Christ—even to associate with your brother ministers you and wife are, marked for death between Jan. 1st 1930 or Friday June 13th 1930.

Better get ready to to die.

We are going to get you.

This will convince others the church do not like rotten pastors when we put you out of the way—you dam yellow cur.

A. M. R. VANLANDINGHAM

Hon. Charles S. Tuttle, then United States District Attorney in New York City, and his able assistant Hon. Hubert Delaney, now Tax Commissioner, with the aid of post office detectives found after a thorough investigation that the name of the minister signed to this letter was a forgery. This minister was not in Arkansas when the letter was written and proved that he knew nothing of its contents until he saw it in the paper. He at once sent a denial to the *Afro-American* and an apology to me.

The only newspaper reply made by me to the murderous and vulgar letter of the ministerial (?) Black Hand Association was published in the *Afro-American*, December 21, 1929. A part of that reply is quoted here as a conclusion to the vilest and most dastardly assault ever made by colored preachers upon one of their brothers:

"This threat shows how badly many in the Negro ministry needed the sermon which appeared in your and other papers throughout the country recently on 'Lifting Up A Standard for the People.'

"Permit me to assure you that this will not prevent me from standing by my gospel guns. I cannot think of any one thing that would do the Negro ministry more good at present than to have one of its members murdered for telling the truth.

"The blood of the martyrs has always been the seed of the church, and if my life is needed to arouse the Negro ministry to the sense of its moral duty, then I willingly give that life at any time or place."

ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP

It is said that the question of bread is at bottom of all wars. I am not sure this is true. My first fight was political, the second was social, the third was moral and the fourth was about bread, for it involved feeding the hungry. The last was the longest, bitterest and the most disappointing of all the fights of my life.

I can understand how people, even ministers of the Gospel can differ on political, social and moral questions, but I cannot for the life of me understand how anybody, especially the Shepherds of Christ can fight a man because he feeds hungry people and because he advises others to feed them. Jesus never allowed anyone who followed him to go away hungry. He said as much about supplying the needs of the body as He did about supplying the needs of the soul. He commanded His first preachers to feed His sheep and lambs. These preachers were so imbued with the spirit of supplying the physical needs of the people that they organized a

relief bureau in the first church at Jerusalem. Here is the record of the bureau's transactions:

"Neither was there any among them that lacked, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them and brought the price of the things that were sold and laid them down at the Apostle's feet, and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." (Acts 4:34-35.)

The gospel of supplying people's physical needs was preached and practiced by the church during the lifetime of these first apostles. John in his old age made it a test of one's love for God—"But whoso hath this world's goods and seeth his Brother have need and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" Jesus declared in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew that our admission into heaven will not depend upon our attitude toward the sermons we have preached, the prayers we have offered, the testimonies we have given, the churches we have built or the money we have raised, but "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; naked and ye clothed me," etc.

For preaching in pulpit and press, for practising in my daily life this part of our Lord's ministry and for advising other ministers to do the same thing, I brought

down upon myself not only the most vitriolic criticism of my brother clergymen, but their scorn, ridicule, withering sarcasm and blasphemous falsehoods. It is shockingly painful that these criticisms came from the most prominent and best trained ministers in the country. If I were to publish their caustic comments without my statements upon which their ravings were based, the reader would think that I had called them wolves in sheep's clothing, scoundrels, drunkards, gamblers and policy racketeers.

As intimated in the previous chapter, by the last week in November, 1930, the colored people were facing the hardest winter since their emancipation. Neither the state nor the nation was making any plans for relief. Not a single leader in or out of the pulpit had made any suggestion in print about meeting the economic crisis.

The first week in December the famous Miss Nannie H. Burroughs came out with a syndicated article. She challenged every leader and every organization including the preachers and the churches to do something to help the suffering race through the winter. It was a heart-searching article and was read from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Here are excerpts:

"What on earth is the matter with Negro organizations—Church, Fraternal, Welfare and Educational, National and State—that they are so impotent in the present economic crisis and industrial depression?

"The people are out of work; they are hungry; they

are indulging in all kinds of vice; they are like sheep without a shepherd. Where are the leaders? What are they thinking and what are they doing? Are they hibernating until the convention season? Are they going to sit around all winter and depend on charity to feed the people and then come out in the summer time all regaled to lead the people (to conventions)?

"The Negro masses do not need groundhog leaders: those who tuck themselves away comfortably all winter and then peep out in February to see whether winter is over. No, the winter will not be over until something definite, constructive and permanent is done about unemployment as it affects the Negro race.

"The leaders have not united to do what they can for the people. They could assemble and decide to keep one fact before the American people. The fact of the moral and social injustice and danger of a permanent boycott against Negro labor. Forced and confirmed idleness will make the Negro a social menace and a moral millstone about the neck of the nation. Idleness will do as much injury to American ideals as it will do the Negro progress. This fact has not been put before the nation over against its program of elimination, boycott or discrimination in Negro employment.

"Do the Negro leaders know the plight of the masses? Have they gone through the communities to see the havoc that is being wrought by idleness? The homes of the masses are packed with idle men who are resorting to every kind of vice to fill up their idle hours and satiate their lower passions. 'They eat the bread of

wickedness and drink the wine of violence; they sleep not except they have done mischief.' Under such conditions every virtue in the Negro home is in danger of destruction. If this demoralizing situation keeps up, the hearts of the people will canker, children will be smitten by ignorance, poverty and crime, and the homes of the masses will become rows of pest houses. No race can live in enforced idleness without succumbing to the vile, lustful, embruting, all-destroying power of it.

"What can the leaders do about it? They can do a great deal about it if they care a great deal about it. They can put the case of the race squarely before the American people. Not in wordy resolutions, but in clear, dispassionate, challenging, courageous appeals for economic justice. This has not been done. The leaders have not spoken in one voice; they have not, therefore, used their very first weapon of defense in the time of trouble. Even God wants us to ask for what we need and it is hardly reasonable to expect white employers to give black Americans what they need when thousands of their own people are affected by the unemployment situation. They serve their own first. It is unfair, unwise and un-American, but they do it. But people will stop and think if you give them anything to think about. White Americans do not really realize the tragic condition of our people at this time.

"When this nation goes to war there is no discrimination. This demoralizing situation will be worse than war if the Negro becomes a confirmed loafer because he is a civilian of organized prejudice in labor units

and industries. Let the nation know it. It is time for the leaders to speak for the people and speak to the people. The leaders should care enough about this situation to put aside all of their petty differences and excuses and sit down together and see at least one reason why they should unite to save their own people from moral death. Some strong hand and a God inspired voice can start crying in the wilderness. The leaders of the churches of all denominations should counsel together. Their common task in this crisis is to preach a ringing message of faith, courage and indomitable will. Religion isn't worth a cent if it does not give you overcoming faith. We have reached our extremity in this situation and man's extremity is God's opportunity. It is time for the men who represent God to speak. Deliverance will not come in a day but it will come if the Christian leaders would only stand up in the midst of 'a perverse and crooked generation and speak and challenge the people to try God.'

"Have we among the thousands of Christian ministers, enough men with deep spiritual acumen who can put deeds above creeds, a righteous cause above 'collections,' the souls of men above selfish complacency who would take it upon themselves to preach the kind of gospel that will so quicken and deepen the spiritual life of the people that they will decide to turn their adversities into stepping stones? Our own leaders can do much to help the people out of this dilemma.

"If we have leaders now is the time for them to go to leading the people and stop bleeding the people."

Since the challenge of Miss Burroughs included the preachers and churches; since Jesus and the Apostles led the world in caring for the poor and needy, I thought it was proper and right that my plea should be made chiefly to the clergymen and churches of all denominations. Here are excerpts from my reply:

"Miss Nannie H. Burroughs, whose pen is mightier than a sword, in a syndicated article about three weeks ago mercilessly castigated the preachers, churches, fraternal and welfare organizations for their indifference toward the unemployed, suffering Negroes.

"She characterized Negro leaders as 'hibernating ground hogs who will peep out in February to see is winter over,' and concludes with this stinging challenge: 'If we have leaders, now is the time for them to go to leading the people and to stop bleeding the people.'

"I have waited in vain for an answer to this indictment. For fear that silence may be construed as giving consent, I am breaking into the columns of every Negro newspaper in the United States I can reach.

"Every close observer will admit that the situation is the most tragic we have faced since the Emancipation. If there was any doubt about the seriousness of the depression among Negroes, that doubt was dispelled about two weeks ago when T. Arnold Hill, of the National Urban League, completed and published a survey of *Unemployment Among Negroes in the United States*. This report shows that about one-fourth of the

colored people in the twenty-five large cities are out of work and hungry. This is not only a most pathetic challenge to every race leader and race organization, but to every Negro individual who has a job and is living comfortably. If the churches do not answer this challenge, they ought to shut up and close up.

"The churches will give a glorious answer to this heartrending appeal if the preachers will lead. I am inspired to make this statement by the generous response of most of the churches in Manhattan, New York. Four churches in New York City have opened free food kitchens at the suggestion and under the leadership of their pastors. These and other pastors have established a central Relief Bureau where clothes, food, coal and ofttimes a little money are given to the 35,000 unemployed men and women of the race in the city. This Bureau is under the direction of Rev. Shelton Hale Bishop, Assistant Rector of St. Philip's P. E. Church. Rev. Mr. Bishop is working night and day to find jobs for the jobless and to give relief to the suffering thousands.

"Three weeks ago the Aybssinian Baptist Church opened a Relief Bureau under the direction of A. Clayton Powell, Jr. An appeal was made to the church and community for clothes. Bundles came in so rapidly that it now requires four persons, working eight hours a day, to receive and distribute them to the needy. At the end of three weeks 4,500 pieces of clothing had been given away.

"Through the generosity of the Seward Prosser

Committee, this Bureau has been able to place on an average of one hundred half-time workers each week. Others are sent to clean houses, wash windows and do other work for our members who are in good circumstances, and these members pay fifty cents an hour for the service rendered.

"At a Sunday morning service two weeks ago, the pastor pledged $1,000 of his salary to open a free food kitchen. Within a few minutes, without any urging, church members and church organizations raised in additional pledges and cash, $1,500. The Relief Bureau now has $2,500 in hand or in sight and will open the kitchen December 26 and will keep it open for the next three months, or as long as the need exists.

"This pastor told his members not to give him any 'hand shake' money, collections or donations during the holidays, but to make all their gifts instead to the poor.

"He has been driving a 1926 car and his officers wanted to give him a new one, but this he absolutely refused to accept. What sort of a representative of the lowly Jesus is a big, fat, well dressed preacher in a new car riding up and down streets which are lined with homeless, penniless and foodless men, women and children?

"If every Negro preacher in this country would refuse to accept donations from churches during the holidays, not a single person of the race would go hungry the week we are celebrating the birth of the Man who became poor for our sakes, that we, through His poverty might be made rich.

"There are 10,000 Negro preachers who ought to give their salaries during the months of January, February and March to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. Another 10,000 ought to give during those months half of their salaries and another 10,000 should give one-fourth of their salaries for the same purpose. This would give these preachers an undreamed of power and influence in their localities.

"It would also open the hearts and pocketbooks of their members and, lastly, would give us a revival of religion among Negroes for which we have been offering hypocritical prayers for the last twenty-five years.

"If we fail to do this we should never again preach or read from the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew—'I was hungry and ye fed Me; I was naked and ye clothed Me.'

"The churches and lodges have gotten a large part of the colored people's money during the last sixty years, and for the sake of our starving brothers and sisters whom we have often robbed under the guise of religion, friendship, love, truth and charity, let us restore unto them this winter at least enough of that money to keep them from starving and freezing.

"The preachers, churches and lodges that remain indifferent this winter to our sorely depressed people will soon be gone, and they ought to be gone and forgotten forever."

This article appeared in twenty-five papers during the third week in December. Before New Year's Day,

1931, it had been copied by perhaps every colored paper in the United States. For the next two months the ministerial conferences and prominent clergymen from coast to coast, with few exceptions, made *me,* not *my plea,* the subject of their discussions and resolutions. The colored newspapers reaped a harvest. It is conservatively estimated that more than four million extra copies were sold. For once, thank God, Negroes read race papers.

Clippings from forty papers showed that only three ministers discussed my suggestions. The others cursed me. When men resort to personal abuse, vituperation and bitter misrepresentation instead of dispassionately approaching the subject under consideration, it shows that they are either ignorant or that they are trying to hide something from their readers. The ministers who wrote those articles either did not know the Bible, or they deliberately refused to recognize its authority on caring for the poor. One learned reverend addressed to me a two column open letter in which he said:

"Bear in mind, however, that it is a mooted question whether the church should actively engage in making medicine, serving soups and juggling jobs and the like." The writer signed himself, "Formerly Professor of Church History, etc."

If this gentleman's knowledge of all church history is as meager as his knowledge of the history of the first church at Jerusalem as that history relates to helping the needy, no wonder he is a "former professor."

In a syndicated article one of the best-known pastors in the United States, instead of suggesting some way of feeding the hungry, wrote this wildcat statement: "If the ministers, fraternal and welfare leaders are guilty of the charges brought by Dr. Powell, they should not be let off with giving one, two, or three months' salary, but should go to jail." In another article this same pastor said that thirty thousand preachers should be in jail if what Dr. Powell said was true. This clergyman knows that I did not say a word about thirty thousand preachers robbing the people, as my article on the foregoing page will show. Here is exactly what I did say:

"The churches and lodges have gotten a large part of the colored people's money during the last sixty years, and for the sake of the God whose name our very acts have often blasphemed and for the sake of our starving brothers and sisters whom we have often robbed under the guise of religion, friendship, love, truth and charity, let us restore unto them this winter at least enough to keep them from starving and freezing."

To say nothing of the churches in New York and other places that have squandered the people's money, not to mention the preachers who blaspheme God by offering salvation for consecrated dimes and dollars, there are innumerable lodges in the United States that have been unable to meet their sick- and death-claims because of the laxity of those entrusted with their

hard-earned funds. An inmate of our Home for the Aged was a great joiner. When she died three years ago, she was a financial member of thirteen lodges. Six of these failed to pay the death claims because their money had slipped through the holes in the treasurer's bag.

BALTIMORE BAPTIST CONFERENCE

The Baptist Ministers' Conference of Baltimore made two attacks on me in the *Afro-American*, one in the December 27, 1930 issue and one in the January 3, 1931 issue. Both of these verbal assaults were smoke screens made out of falsehoods to keep the people from seeing their duty to the distressed. Take, for example:

"Observers point out that Dr. Powell's salary is six thousand a year and his congregation has given him three thousand for a vacation. In his magnificently furnished dining room alone is a five thousand dollar suite of carved furniture."

How ministers of God could utter and publish such brazen falsehoods and then preach on Sunday about Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Light is beyond my understanding. No wonder many of their churches are a hiss and a byword. For the first time I am giving these private facts to the public. My salary was $3,600 a year during the depression and up to the date of the acceptance of my resignation in November, 1937. During the most prosperous years, with the church clear

of debt, I never received as much as five thousand dollars a year. There were three pastors of debt-ridden churches in New York receiving six thousand a year and all kinds of extra collections—anniversary, birthday and vacation presents. From 1930 to 1937, I was given $350.00 a year for vacation. As for the five thousand dollar dining room suite, I offered in January, 1931, through the columns of the *Afro-American*, to ship it to any minister in Baltimore upon the receipt of a certified check of one thousand dollars. The check has not arrived yet. In that same issue I made a motion nominating the "Reverend Doctors Observers" members of the Ananias Club and that the one who led them in such notorious misstatement of facts be made president of that club for life.

NEW JERSEY BAPTIST CONFERENCE

The New Jersey Baptist Ministers' Conference has the honor of giving me the unkindest cut of all the Conferences. I had a weakness for the ministers of New Jersey, for some of my sweetest hours of fellowship were spent with them. Many of my best evangelistic meetings were held in their churches. I thought I could count my friends there by the hundreds, but the following article from the Pittsburgh *Courier* will show how badly and sadly I was disillusioned:

"Orange, N. J., Jan. 22—The Baptist Ministers Conference of Newark and vicinity met at New Hope Baptist Church, Sussex and Dey Streets, Newark, on

Monday, January 5. The meeting was a free-for-all discussion at first and looked as though the 250 ministers of Newark and vicinity were going to cross the Hudson river and take Rev. Dr. A. Clayton Powell, but they became reconciled when the committee went out to the anteroom and came back with an open letter to Rev. Dr. A. Clayton Powell, which is as follows:

'In reply to your very caustic and scathing strictures against the Negro ministry, in your recent release, through most of the Negro press, permit us to make just a few observations for your very careful consideration.

'Some one of our university presidents said the other day, "I want my son to have an education, but I am shy of most of the college training." Many a man, as you know, good doctor, may have a college training, still he is not educated. We have hosts of men who are educated beyond the point of intelligence.

'We dare not dispute your sincerity but we do question your discretion. You remind us, good doctor, of the young bull charging the steam car. The sturdy old engineer looked back upon the prostrate form of the bull and said, "I admire your pluck but I would not give a —— for your judgment." Neither would we, doctor. You may be an homilitician but as a statistician, you fail. Your general information on Bible facts may be alright, but we would not advise anyone to follow your statistics. Kindly let us have a look at your late book of facts concerning the number of Negro pastors in this country; are there 30,000 pastors in the Negro

church who could give $500 of their salaries and not render themselves paupers? Even if there were 30,000 reputable pastors in our ranks?

'Now, Dr. Powell, let us grant what you have said about the whole matter to be true; you are a spiritual surgeon. A spiritual neurologist, to say nothing of your being a spiritual practician? You are also reputed to be a noted spiritual pathologist, but you have not regarded the ethics of a common practician; you refused to get a proper diagnosis that cannot be had without the patient's presence, then with careful questioning, etc., especially when the case is such a delicate one to handle, as you tried to handle.

'You not only refused to consult your patient for diagnosing, but you take the attitude of the quack doctor, in his cure-all process. You accepted no assistance in administering the anesthetic, in fact you have not even given your patient the privacy of your office, to say nothing of the hospital, you have broadcasted your ether and chloroform, regardless of your time, place, temperament or what not. Did you sterilize your instruments before you operated on your patients? We fear not, and too, doctor, granting that your diagnosis was correct, we are afraid you have done many of your patients more harm than good. Many of them, as you may have heard, have developed very high temperatures, most of them are suffering from NAUSEA, or is it NOSTALGIA, doctor? You see, we are not NOSTOLOGISTS, just plain PRACTICIANS.

'We state the facts that you have done not only

your fellow ministers, but the cause of Christ, as well as yourself, irreparable injury, we are inclined to feel more keenly the injury you have done yourself than anyone else. You remember what Burns said about, 'O wad some power the giftie gie us, to see oursel's as ithers see us!' Find that, doctor, and read it carefully, no matter whether it came out delirium tremens or intelligensia-delusion; it will help you.

'Remember, doctor, few of our so-called great men die upon the mount of honor. A man ascending does one thing naturally, and the other possibly. He looks down as he climbs and may become dizzy, and too many fall from their dizzy heights. Did we not see your name appended to the last article, we would think it the ranting of some restless Red, or some arch-enemy of the church. Of course, the devil knows where to begin to destroy, for he is president of the 'HELL & COMPANY WRECKING CONCERN.' Wreckers begin at the top to tear down, but builders begin at the foundation. It does not require skilled mechanics to tear down, but it does require such skill to build up.

'Again let us grant what you say is true. Had all of us been sent to Europe, several times. Had our families toured continental Europe and much of the Orient, had each of the 30,000 been sent several times to the Pacific Coast, for their health, had each of the fictitious 30,000 been escutcheoned for many a summer at one of the finest summer resorts in this country, had we fallen heir to three hundred thousand dollars worth of church property as a nucleus which could

help build a $375,000 church building and community center. We too, might join in the Amens to what you have said, but again we read in Gal. 6:1, "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness considering thyself less thou also be tempted."

'May we feel, Dr. Powell, that you are sincere as we are, and that you give liberally, to all who need, as the Lord prospers you, and that above all, you realize that the prime object of the minister of Christ is to save the lives of men, for in His death their souls were saved. Thus, we call upon you to preach the whole gospel and practice what you preach.

'Our prayer for you is that God will touch your heart sufficiently to make you more liberal in the gift of human kindness for your (imaginary) weak brother. More people are dying from the need of a little cheer and common fellowship than from bodily hunger. A man who has the proper hope and trust in life, seldom becomes a beggar. God bless you, doctor, and give you long life to do much real good as you have done. Let not your ambition for a cheap notoriety spoil your real worth.

We are yours in Christ,
BAPTIST MINISTERS CONFERENCE OF
NEWARK AND VICINITY, COMMITTEE.' "

There were nine men on this committee. One of them attached an M.A. degree to his name and the other eight a D.D. degree. I will let the reader pass

judgment upon the literary composition of these learned doctors and this Master of Arts. I replied to this letter at the time it was written because it was typical of the ravings and misrepresentations of individual ministers and their Conferences from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Here is my reply as published in the papers in February, 1931:

"I had the kindest feeling toward the ministers when I released my article to the press, suggesting and urging that they take the lead in Relief Work during the winter months among the millions of our hungry and, in many cases, naked people.

"Instead of accepting my suggestions in the spirit in which they were given, they rushed out of their comfortable places of seclusion and began to strike back at me like a 'generation of vipers.' To their everlasting shame everyone of my ministerial critics resorted to what they know to be downright lies. A casual reading of the foregoing letter from New Jersey will convince anyone of this.

"First, my article was not a criticism of the ministry, but a plea to the ministry for a united effort in relieving distress. I did not ask that '30,000 pastors give $500 each of their salaries and render themselves paupers.' I asked that 30,000 would give a percentage of their salaries and if these 30,000 could not do it, or would not do it, all they had to do was to say what they could and would do.

"But instead of discussing and doing the relief work,

they make an unjustified attack upon me. They say that 'I inherited when I came to New York, $300,000 with which to complete a $375,000 Church and Community Center.'

"In fact the Church and Community House did not cost but $334,800 and, according to their falsehoods, our church only had to raise $34,800, whereas they know that we dedicated with a mortgage of $60,000.

"As I write, a letter is before me from Mr. W. C. Cole, auditor of the Church, stating what all our members know, that the property in 40th Street was sold for $190,000. When we got ready to move uptown, after paying off a mortgage of $84,000 and a broker's fee of about $3,000, we had just $103,000 left. The balance, $231,800, was raised by our members and in less than five years.

"These ministers further know that they are not telling the truth when they say that my church has sent me to Europe several times and to the Pacific coast several times for my health, and that I had spent many a summer at one of the finest summer resorts in this country.

"The church did send me abroad once, but it had nothing to do with my family's trip to Europe, or my stopping with Mrs. Gray of our Church at Saratoga, for I presume that is what they mean. I paid Mrs. Gray $19 a week for the privilege of resting in her public house, and for the last two years I have spent less than a week there.

"Neither did the church have anything to do with

my trips to California. It gives me a vacation offering once a year, when I will accept it, and I use that to go where I please.

"You can see without putting on your glasses that not only all of these attacks on me, but all the big words they are using—that neither they nor the people understand—to say nothing about their curse words, are intended to keep their members from seeing that they are not doing their duty to them. Fake shepherds can not shear sheep very long without feeding them. The eyes of their members are not closed.

"They say 'the gospel that I am broadcasting over the country is wrecking the church and ministry and doing myself an incalculable harm.' I care nothing for myself personally except that I shall continue to preach and practice the gospel, and if that gospel wrecks the church and ministry, I haven't anything to say but 'Amen.'

"I am not afraid of the ministerial mob of 250 coming from New Jersey to New York for me. Come on and give me a chance to preach to you. These preachers who are fighting me instead of feeding the people, will be a shameful memory in a few years. 'Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad!' "

That the ministerial followers of the Good Shepherd should wantonly and slanderously attack a brother for helping the distressed and for advising others to help them during the greatest depression the world has ever known constitutes the most shameful chapter in Negro

church history. This book is an autobiography and as such would be incomplete without this history; otherwise, I would not have recorded it. I have refrained from calling the names of the guilty. They are too numerous to inflict upon the reader. I have them in a large box of clippings, and I will treasure them without any bitterness. These clippings show that three men publicly defended my position. The brilliant Charles Satchell Morris, Jr., then Dean of Virginia Seminary and College, dropped in at the Baptist Ministers' Conference at Roanoke, Virginia, where I was being verbally assaulted. He got the floor and by eloquent words expressed his approval of my letter and convinced some of the brethren that my position was in harmony with the teachings of Christ and His Apostles. He told them that they were fighting God and not Dr. Powell.

Dr. R. C. Barbour, who, in my humble opinion, is the best editorial writer on religion and the race question the Negroes have in America, published my letter with a commendatory editorial in the *National Baptist Voice* of December 20, 1930. I cull this sentence from the heart of that long and splendid editorial:

"What other reason has a church for existing if not to minister to human needs and human welfare?"

It is passing strange that the preachers had not thought of this. My most learned antagonists seemingly thought that it was their duty and my duty to feed hungry people on ideals in order that they might

physically starve to death and go to heaven quickly for milk and honey, long white robes and golden slippers. They said, "Read and preach the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, but don't practice it. Let the social agencies do the practicing, for they are better equipped than the church." God have mercy on such churches!

When it looked as if I would be burned in effigy by all the colored Baptist ministerial organizations in America, Dr. Barbour again wrote a two-column editorial in the *Voice,* January 24, 1931, which made some of the pastors realize that they were ministers of God and not members of the Ku Klux Klan. These three paragraphs from the editorial will give the reader some idea of its sanity:

"Then quite a few ministerial conferences over the country drew up resolutions of condemnation castigating both Dr. Powell and Miss Burroughs. And the controversy still rages.

"While we have enjoyed the controversy immensely, we nevertheless deplore the fact that so many ministers allowed bitterness, personal attacks and ill-poised innuendo to creep into the discussion. It is the most difficult thing in the world to find a group of Negro leaders who are able to enter into a discussion dispassionately and without bitterness. The Negro minister is far too sensitive and transparent. He cannot stand criticism. He could learn a great deal from his Master along this line. Jesus Christ never once lost His poise or His head when some violent and ruthless

critic accosted Him. Surely this is one of the reasons why He was able to accomplish so much in such a short time. Neither friend nor foe could destroy His morale.

"We have not seen anything either in the Burroughs or Powell articles to inspire such bitterness and resentment as we find in the many replies featured each week in the secular press. We agree in part with both of them."

Rev. Marshall L. Shepard, pastor of the Mt. Olivet Tabernacle Baptist Church of Philadelphia and a member of the Pennsylvania Legislature, knows me better than any young man except my son. He knows my few strong points and my many weak ones. For three years he was my able and popular assistant. He did much to help me put on the great social program at Abyssinia. My home and the Abyssinian pulpit are still his, and his pulpit and home are mine. He has a great family tradition, unusual native ability, plenty of uncommon sense and a fine university training. Dr. Shepard is easily the outstanding man and minister in the state of Pennsylvania. When the old pastors, to their shame and disgrace, lost their heads, and the controversial pot was boiling over wherever two or three Negro ministers met in my name, here is what Shepard said in the *Christian Review:*

"While the press is full of criticisms and denunciations of this New York pastor, from other pastors throughout the country, permit me to say a word too.

Because it seems that a lot of preachers are about to lose their tempers and the secular papers are reaping a harvest out of our wrangles. So, I think that it is time to call a halt! This matter can't be settled through the newspapers.

"In the first place I don't see any need of getting all 'hot and bothered' about anything that Dr. Powell said in his articles. First, he said that he is going to give $1,000 of his salary for the aid of the unemployed and suggests that thousands of other preachers ought to give a portion or all of their salaries for the same cause. Dr. Powell has a right to do his share as he sees it, and urge others to do the same without having his name cast out as evil by the rest of the brethren.

"Perhaps a lot of the brethren in the ministry are a bit peeved because Dr. Powell is able and willing to give more than they are prepared to give. And perhaps they are also hurt because Abyssinian Church is in a position to do a bigger job for the unemployed than their own churches are able to do, and some are afraid that the New York pastor will receive a lion's share of public praise for his deeds. I say this because in nearly every reply that I have read so far, the writer was eager to tell what he and his church were doing. I admit that the public interest aroused by Dr. Powell's letter would give any preacher who used Powell's name a splendid opportunity to get his own work before the public.

"Some pastors seemed to fear that Dr. Powell's statement would do the ministry harm. It is very rare

that criticism from without can do much harm to a preacher in his own church. If he is honestly doing his work and has the confidence of his own people, nothing that any other preacher can write in a newspaper will affect his work and standing with his own flock. The converse is also true. When a preacher has lost the esteem and respect of his own church, resolutions, newspaper commendations and statements of other preachers will hardly restore such confidence or prevent the church from putting him out once they are determined to do so because of his own misdeeds.

"Dr. A. Clayton Powell has done a great work at the Abyssinian Church and he has represented the best traditions of the Negro ministry. Now, because in his zeal he should say something with which we cannot heartily agree, why attack him on a lot of personal matters that are nobody's business. What Abyssinian does for Powell, and what he does for his family, and the age of his car or the price of his dining room furniture is all beside the point. If you can give a thousand dollars, give it; if you can't, give what you can. That's the issue and if the newspapers don't publish what you do as widely as they report what Dr. Powell does, remember that 'Thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward you openly.' "

Morris, Barbour and Shepard helped to end the controversy which forms the most disappointing and discouraging chapter in my long public career. It leaves two painful memories sticking in my mind: first, that

my sacrificial efforts to relieve suffering humanity were interpreted as a desire for cheap notoriety. This sentence is quoted from a public letter sent me by two hundred and fifty preachers: "Let not your ambition for a cheap notoriety spoil your real work."

I believe that my learned friends meant publicity, not notoriety. Even if I did give one thousand hard-earned dollars to feed the hungry only in order to get my name in the newspapers, that certainly could not properly be called cheap publicity. But I do not have to buy publicity at any price. The building of the church and community house at a cost of three hundred and thirty-four thousand dollars and paying for them in less than five years, together with the operation of the greatest social, educational and religious program of any Negro church, had already given my name a place in nearly every newspaper printed in the English language.

Second, that I had asked the preachers to join me in helping to relieve the distress of the unemployed in order to hurt the ministry.

Not a single pastor has even intimated in what way my article injured the preachers, or what earthly reason I could have for trying to harm any minister. Such a thing is unthinkable. I never wanted to be anything but a good friend to the preachers, and hundreds in all parts of the United States will testify that I have helped them.

If evidence of my love for the preachers is needed, let me point out that I have defended the ministry at

a time when, broken in health from caring for the needy, I was in bed and preparing to enter a hospital for two months' treatment.

In February, 1931, while the ministers were calling me everything but a child of God, H. L. Mencken, in the magazine *Opportunity*, published the most dastardly attack ever made on Negro preachers. This great literary genius applied every vulgar epithet he could find in the dictionary to the Negro Baptist and Methodist clergymen. From my sick bed I dictated a reply defending the ministers; it was published in *Opportunity*, March, 1931, under the caption "H. L. Mencken Finds Flowers in a 'Dunghill.'" By the courtesy of the magazine it is here reproduced in full:

"Negroes of the United States! Stop boasting about your economic progress. You have scarcely made any. You are poorer than the Indians or the Mexican greasers. All the presidents of the United States, from Harrison to Hoover, with other outstanding men and women of the world, who declared your progress during the past sixty-five years could not be matched by any other group in America, were 'kidding' you.

"Your success in business is hardly worth mentioning, and your supposed hundreds of successful physicians and lawyers are, in fact, so few that when you stumble upon one you have seen a miracle. Your hundreds of Negro teachers in the mixed schools of New York and New England are so inconsequential that they are not selected by white boards, as you imagine,

for 'white men' in these regions 'do not engage Negro teachers to teach their children.'

"Get it out of your head at once that Bert Williams, Florence Mills, Jules Bledsoe, Paul Robeson and Richard B. Harrison will ever be enrolled among the successful artists, for your 'Negro artists are not much better off than your professional men.' Your painters are botchers. They can not earn a living.

"You had thought that W. E. Burghardt DuBois, Countee Cullen, James Weldon Johnson, Walter White, Langston Hughes, Carter G. Woodson, Kelly Miller and a dozen others, dead and living, were good writers. You are mistaken. The most critical magazine in America has to apologize to the reading public every time it prints an article from the pen of a Negro. Your leaders are either trying to transform the Negroes into white people or turn them into monkeys. 'They are all on the wrong track.'

"Your musical gift of which you have been proud from the days of the original Fisk Jubilee Singers to these glorious days of Harry Burleigh, Roland Hayes and Marian Anderson, 'is largely imaginary.'

"Your Church, good God! If you ever muster courage to enter another one, put on a gas mask. The preacher you thought was preaching the pure gospel, with what little light he could get in the spiritual darkness of America, is a 'barnyard theologian,' and the Church you thought was a pile of salt to save you is a 'dunghill.' If you have any respect for your Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes leave them at home, for once

inside of your Church you will find a 'hogwaller Christianity.'

"The foregoing statements do not misrepresent in the least an article in February *Opportunity* by Mr. H. L. Mencken, the most distinguished and learned iconoclast on the American continent.

"Mr. Mencken in his Baltimore 'Dunghill Varieties of Christianity' finds at least two flowers. He calls one Episcopalian and the other Catholic. Small favors thankfully received, but, beware of the Greeks bearing gifts, for this scholarly discoverer knows that the same flowers can be found in a thousand other spots in all parts of this country, and many of them are growing in Negro Methodist and Baptist churches.

"The eminent Baptist ecclesiastic, who boasted that 'among all the Negro Baptists in America there was not a one who was not a Fundamentalist,' is woefully ignorant of the present trend of the Negro Methodist and Baptist ministry. R. R. Wright, L. H. King, J. W. E. Bowen, W. Y. Bell, Bishop Matthew Wesley Clair, and scores of other Methodist clergymen are as far removed from the 'barnyard theologian' as Mr. Mencken is from the most mental and morally warped Nordic who declares that the poorest, lowest and most ignorant white man is superior to the wealthiest and most cultured Negro.

"I can point to hundreds of modern progressive Negro Baptist ministers, like Mordecai Johnson, Vernon Johns, J. Raymond Henderson, Horatio S. Hill, C. H. Pearson, W. P. Hayes and Miles Fisher.

"I know the preachers from coast to coast, and, as I dictate this article, I cannot think of a young Negro minister of training who is contending for the 'tradition of the elders.' Even in many of the churches presided over by men who are hovering around three score years and ten, like the 19th Street Baptist Church of Washington, D. C., where Walter Brooks has been the shepherd for forty-five years, Mr. Mencken will find the same decorum, dignity and intelligent seriousness he finds in the isolated Baltimore church.

"I agree that the doctrine of Fundamentalism, as believed and practiced in certain sections, is not only 'a negation of every intellectual decency,' but of every other kind of decency, and especially of respect for the sacredness of human personality. I will bet Mr. Mencken a year's subscription to the *American Mercury* against a contribution to our Free Food Kitchen, that the mob which went on a rampage in Maryville, Mo., while the *Opportunity* press was turning off his article, was 95% Fundamentalist. These Fundamentalists were not poor 'white trash' either, unless those composing the executive, legislative and judicial departments of that state are considered in that class. Hardly.

"These Fundamentalists roasted an innocent man, for under our system of jurisprudence every man is presumed innocent until his guilt is proven. They not only burnt up a schoolhouse, the symbol of American progress, but the judicial prerogative, the state and federal constitution, the decency and self-respect of their own women who stood looking at the nude body

of a man writhing in flames, without the slightest shock to their modesty. If the Fundamentalist white pulpit or press has uttered a single word of protest against this act, a thousand times redder than the reddest acts of the Russian Communists, a wistful eye has not seen it nor a listening ear heard it. Even the February *American Mercury* is as silent as the Sphinx.

"On the other hand, it would be hard to find, in these United States, a single Negro preacher who has not, with the most vigorous English, thundered against this un-Christian, inhuman, anarchistic carnival. The Negro Church is the only church that has persistently opposed lynching and the Negro pulpit is the only pulpit that has unceasingly preached the brotherhood of man.

"The Negro Church, from its beginning until now, has valiantly fought for freedom, justice and every principle of Christianity. In 1832 the first Anti-Slavery Society was organized in the basement of a colored Baptist Church in Boston, by Wm. Lloyd Garrison and twelve others, including the Negro pastor of that church. Mr. Garrison went to that old ecclesiastical 'dunghill' because it was the only church or place in the environs of the 'cradle of liberty' (?) which would allow him to start a campaign against the most colossal crime ever committed on this or any other continent.

"Nearly every school established for Negroes or by Negroes grew out of the earnest advocacy and fervent prayers of these old 'barnyard' preachers. While old Pastor Qualls was on his knees praying in the basement

of the Friendship Baptist Church of Atlanta, Ga., for God to send someone to enlighten the young Negroes who had just emerged from the darkness of Christian slavery, two noble white women from the North knocked at the door, and then and there Spelman Seminary, the most noted school for women and girls in the Southland, was born.

"All Negro publishing houses in this country were not only started by Negro preachers, but they are run by Negro preachers.

"Dr. George E. Haynes is not merely the Secretary of the Commission on Race Relations of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, but his wisdom is sought by men of all races more than the wisdom of any other member of the Commission.

"Dr. Eugene Kinckle Jones, the organizing and directing genius of the National Urban League, one of the most efficient social service organizations in the nation, gladly admits that he received his inspiration from his father, who was an honored Baptist preacher. Ninety per cent of the business and professional men and women of the race would be happy to testify that they owe their success to the publicity and patronage of the Negro pulpit.

"Let us look for some more flowers. Mr. Mencken says that he believes that Negroes are superior to American whites in more ways than one. To justify this belief he places special emphasis upon the 'extraordinary decency' of the race.

"Had Mr. Mencken gone a little farther, he would

have discovered that the average Negro is also superior to the average white American in long suffering, patience, meekness, veracity and love. The Negro has almost destroyed the white man's ethical standards, and especially his sense of veracity. Let a Negro attempt to register at a decent hotel, purchase a pullman or a theatre ticket, and the white man will look him straight in the eye, without the slightest compunction of conscience and say, 'Not a room left; house sold out; every berth reserved.'

"I wish I could say that this careless veracity had not crept into the average white pulpit. When a Negro attempts to join a white church, nine out of ten times the preacher says to him with the greatest theatrical kindness and sympathy, 'I have not a spark of prejudice and I would like to fellowship you, but my parishioners would not stand for it. Your presence would disrupt my church.' A white preacher without prejudice could not remain in a congregation with prejudice six months, as demonstrated recently in Detroit.

"Now, this Negro knows that the hotel clerk, the theatre and pullman agents and the preacher are not telling the truth, but he doesn't turn away with any bitterness in his heart from the white man, but pity. He loves the white man who hates him, and the one who loves is always superior to the one who hates.

"Where did the Negro get his superior decency, patience, meekness, veracity and love? He certainly did not get these qualities in the school house. Neither did he receive them in the white man's home, for they

were not there to receive. They were drilled into him in the Negro Church, Sunday School and the Christian home. God only knows what would have been the history of the race in this country if these superior Christian qualities had not been pounded into the Negro by the Negro preacher and church, which Mr. Mencken so mercilessly slanders, and so ruthlessly attempts to read out of the race.

"Are the Negro preachers and churches perfect, or have they always given a good account of their stewardship? I am the last preacher to give an affirmative answer to these questions.

"All close observers will say with Mr. Mencken that too much of the Negro's energy, money and time have been used in buying and building churches and too little in race building. We have enough church houses. It would be a godsend if we would cease church building and buying, except in rare cases, for the next twenty-five years, and devote our energy, money and time to the economic, social, intellectual, moral and spiritual advancement of the race.

"All honest men will further agree with Mr. Mencken that there are too many 'parasites, moron theologians, oily go-getter racketeers, pumping dollars out of the poor people' in the Negro pulpit. But neither Mr. Mencken nor his 'future leaders of black America' need waste any literary shot on these ecclesiastical rascals. The rising tide of intelligence and the deepening sense of a true God in the Negro Church will soon solve this grave problem. Healing, to be permanent,

must come from within—not from without. These fake shepherds, who are shearing the sheep without feeding them, are already on the run. The expulsive power of a new religious affection will, in the next ten or fifteen years, make them a shameful memory.

"When I think that the Negro was brought out of a jungle religion in Africa, into a worse jungle American Christianity; when I recall that the Negro was not only brought here by racketeers, but that he existed for two hundred and forty years in the most damnable racket known to the United States, and that he has lived for the past sixty-five years in the racket of peonage, chain gang labor and industrial exploitation, it is a miracle that he has made any appreciable progress toward genuine religion.

"A greater miracle still is that the Negro believes in any sort of a religion or any kind of a God presented to him by the white American. Had it not been for his ignorance he would have cursed God and died."

Chapter 10

TRYING TO MAKE PORT

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

Moses

A SHIP may put into port for any of the following reasons: to discharge or take on cargo, to escape the stress of weather or to repair a broken or weakened vessel. I tried to make port in 1935 for two of these reasons. I had been sailing a rough ocean for seventy years. Bucking strong tides, going against contrary winds and howling hurricanes, tossed about by storm-lashed billows and tidal waves had created in me a yearning for the serenity and peace of the harbor. Also, hundreds told me that my long experience on life's ocean should be recorded in a book; I tried to make port, in the second place, so that I could discharge my cargo and painstakingly give to the public the things that might be helpful. This could not be done while trying to meet the exacting demands made upon the executive head of an institution with fourteen thousand members and a hundred and fifty leaders. Therefore, on May 18, 1935, I read the following resignation:

"To the Officers and Members of the
Abyssinian Baptist Church
My dear Members:

"No man who has passed three score years and ten is physically able to perform the pastoral duties of a large congregation like yours. He may be, and he should be, a richer and better preacher than ever, but he is not qualified to visit the sick and respond to other demands where physical strength is required.

"I have seen more than one church weakened and crippled by old ministers who clung to their pastoral office for sentimental and other unwise reasons long after they should have retired.

"The Abyssinian Church is greater than any or all the preachers she has had. Pastors come and pastors go, but the church, like Tennyson's brook, must go on forever without let or hindrance.

"I have prayed that I might have wisdom and grace to go at the proper time. I was seventy years of age the fifth day of this month, and as much as it pains me, I am fully persuaded that for the good of the church and the cause of Christ, which I love more than my own life, the hour has arrived for me to retire as your leader. Therefore, I hereby tender my resignation as active pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church and, in keeping with the spirit of your motion of July, 1924, electing me pastor for life, suggest that I be made pastor emeritus. This relation is to become effective as soon as you can conveniently elect my successor.

"This does not mean that I am severing myself

completely from you and your great program for, as long as breath is in my body, this would be a mental and spiritual impossibility. Until the hour I fall asleep, I shall be happy to give advice and help in any way possible, but this advice and help will only be given when sought by your next pastor.

"In December, 1908, I came to you with fear and trembling. You claimed at that time a membership of 1,600 but your published financial roll for that year shows a membership of only 762, and $2,759.29 as the total amount raised for the year. Every piece of property you had was heavily mortgaged, and your bank account was more than three hundred dollars overdrawn.

"Today you have one of the finest church and community house buildings among colored people; a home for the aged second to none in appointment and management in the Negro race—all free of debt. You own a mortgage of twenty-five thousand dollars on the property located at 9-11 West 99th Street and have on deposit in banks about fourteen thousand dollars. Your church is considered one of the model churches of the world, with an efficient staff of twenty-four paid workers. All races from all parts of the earth come here for spiritual refreshment and to study your program. This is because you have had pastors for one hundred and twenty-seven years who came to your pulpit from their knees to contend courageously for the faith which was delivered to the saints nineteen hundred years ago on Olivet's brow, and because for nearly twenty-seven

years your present pastor has been unstintingly supported by the majority of the members and by deacons and trustees whose loyalty to Christ and the church cannot be surpassed by any set of church officers on earth.

"With inexpressible gratitude in my heart to them, to you and all, I pass the Abyssinian Baptist Church pulpit on to my successor, consecrated with twenty-seven years of sincere and unselfish service.

Your brother and friend,

A. Clayton Powell, Sr."

At a special church meeting where all available standing space was occupied, it was unanimously voted not to accept my resignation. This vote, coupled with a protest from both races outside of the church against my giving up the active pastorate, made me decide to withdraw the resignation. This was made easy because the church voted me a six months' leave of absence with pay.

I spent most of the following winter in Cuba and Panama. Cuba is seven hundred and sixty miles long and twenty-five miles wide and has a population of about four million, chiefly Spaniards, Indians and Negroes, with an inconsequential sprinkling of whites. Cuba is the greatest sugar-producing country in the world, and its Havana cigars have a reputation that cannot be equalled anywhere on earth.

Tourists are attracted to Cuba by its remarkable climate. You never need a wrap, heavy underwear or

artificial heat. I spent a month there traveling over more than half of the island without seeing a window glass. The climate is so nearly perfect that only shutters are needed in a storm or to keep out the sunshine during the middle of the day.

Havana, the capital, has a population of six hundred thousand and is the most beautiful Spanish city in the world. Havana is just as morally wicked as it is artistically beautiful. It will be easy for the reader to agree with this when I say that Havana has seven thousand barrooms and only sixty-eight churches. Both gambling and prostitution are legalized. Sloppy Joe's saloon is the most famous sporting place on this side of the Atlantic Ocean.

I do not like to hang around graveyards because they always seem spooky to me, but I spent the better part of two days in the Columbus Cemetery in Havana. It is said to be the most beautiful cemetery in the world. It certainly is the most beautiful I have ever seen. The rich dead are buried on top of the ground in white marble tombs with marble spires and marble drapery. During each of my visits there must have been five hundred people walking up and down the well-kept avenues and streets of this City of the Dead, admiring the beautiful architecture and sculpture of its silent houses. It is the only cemetery I have ever seen which did not look lonely or give you a sepulchral feeling.

Just beyond this White City is another section which is hideous in comparison, where the poor are buried under the ground. The relatives must pay an annual

rent for these graves. If they default, their bones are dug up and the graves are rented to others. In the center of this area is a big building where their bones are thrown. It is said to contain thousands of skeletons which have been dispossessed of their clayey tenements for the nonpayment of rents.

I had a strange experience in this unique cemetery. You could not turn a corner without meeting a beggar. These little vagabonds apparently hid behind the mausoleums of the dead and would make sudden mass attacks on the visitors. A lady near me gave one of them a nickel, and in fifteen seconds he had five "brothers" by his side with outstretched hands. I have met panhandlers in all parts of the world, but the most terrific, pestiferous and persistent panhandlers I have ever met anywhere are in Havana. They are better organized than the American Federation of Labor; they possess the wisdom of Solomon and the memory of an elephant.

When I got out of the car at Columbus Cathedral, a woman with a little babe in her arms walked up and pinned a rose on me saying, "You are a fine-looking gentleman. Make you a present." I was so flattered I gave her a quarter, which I learned later was twenty-four cents too much. She went immediately to at least forty panhandlers and told them what a large sum she had gotten out of me. Then I was bombarded from all directions. I at once saw through the game and stepped back into the automobile. A little girl about eight years old, with big beautiful eyes, came up to

the car window and tried to pin another rose on me and I handed it back to her. She threw it back into my lap. She must have done this twenty times. Finally, to get rid of them, the chauffeur pulled out and we were gone exactly six hours.

When we reached the pier on that evening and I started to get on the boat a beautiful little child looked at me and said, "Remember me?" I said, "Yes, darling, if I saw you in Judgment I would remember you." It was the same little girl who had thrown the rose at me twenty times, and she had the same rose. As a reward for her persistency I gave her ten cents. "Wonderful gentleman," she said. As I stepped on the ship she waved her hand and said, "Adios."

It is necessary to sail about fifteen hundred miles over the Caribbean Sea to reach Panama from Cuba. This is perhaps the most tragic body of water in the world. It is named after the Carib Indians who, with other Indian tribes, inhabited its islands thousands of years before Christ was born. The Spaniards came over about four hundred years ago, robbed and slaughtered these tribes and practically wrecked one of the most beautiful civilizations the world has ever known. This sea touches the South American countries and has in it the West Indies. These islands are called the West Indies because Columbus landed on one of them, and he thought until the day of his death that these islands were a part of India.

Early one morning the last week in January our ship arrived in sight of Panama, one of the most pros-

perous and best-organized of the South American republics. As the fog lifted, we could easily see from our ship the heights of Darien from which Balboa discovered the Pacific Ocean more than four hundred years ago. Just in front of us were two towns, one called Cristobal, built by the Americans, and the other Colon, built by the Panamanians. Cristóbal Colón is the Spanish form of Christopher Columbus.

All on board are excited now, for we are getting ready to start our journey through the Panama Canal which leads from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific. This is the greatest piece of engineering the world has ever known. It is forty-three miles long and took the United States Government ten years to build at a cost of five hundred and thirty-three million dollars.

In connection with the building of the Panama Canal, two tasks especially involved gigantic problems, and their completion required enormous labor and expense. The Gaillard (Culebra) Cut, through the backbone of the South and North American continents, removed the greatest obstruction to the digging of the canal. The reader will get some picture of the colossal job when I say it took nineteen million pounds of dynamite to blow up the mountain that stood in the way and let the water through to the Pacific Ocean. The cut through the mountain is about eight miles long and about half a mile wide. The other achievement, which seems even more like a miracle, was the formation of an artificial lake between this cut and the Atlantic Ocean.

Gatun Lake has a surface of 164 square miles and is the largest artificial body of water in the world. To form the lake a ridge was built to dam up the waters of the River Chagres. The ridge is one mile and a half long, half a mile in width and one hundred and five feet high. The surface of the lake is eighty-five feet above ocean level.

The ship steams slowly from the Atlantic Ocean into the mouth of the canal where it is hitched on to four mules. Two of the mules serve to pull it along and two of them are used to keep it from jamming into the great gates of the lock as it goes into one of the lock chambers. (These are the first mules I have ever seen that did not kick and the reason they do not kick is because they are made of iron and operated by electricity. They are called mules in memory of the real mules that used to pull boats through the canals.) When they get the ship into the chamber, the great doors of the lock close behind it and then the doors at the opposite end of the lock open in front of it, and the water rushes in from Gatun Lake until it is stopped by another gate half a mile away. This process is kept up until the ship has been lifted eighty-five feet above ocean level, and then it sails out on the lake.

Now, since the ship is eighty-five feet above the Pacific Ocean, it has to be let down in order to reach ocean level, and so we go through the same process of letting it down with water from this big lake until it gets to the level of the Pacific Ocean. It then moves on slowly under its own steam through the great Gaillard

Cut while the passengers watch the monkeys, alligators, birds and other tropical animals and plants along the beautiful shores. After riding through the canal for eight hours, we docked at Panama City. If the canal had not been built, our trip to California and the Orient would have taken us almost three weeks longer, for we would have had to go around Cape Horn at the lower end of South America. That trip is seventy-eight hundred miles farther than the one from the Atlantic to the Pacific via the Panama Canal.

There are two Panama cities: the old and the new. An automobile ride of forty minutes through tropical fruit trees and flowers brings you to old Panama. Only three houses are standing here now, and the ruined walls of what was perhaps the greatest cathedral ever built in South America. This was once a beautiful and prosperous town. Henry Morgan, the notorious English pirate, with a gang of pirates went there about three hundred years ago. He found this cathedral whose walls were three feet thick, and the town of seven thousand houses all built of cedar. He spent four weeks robbing, murdering and burning the town; he destroyed every house and killed nearly every man, woman and child. He left for England with thousands of pounds of silver, gold and other loot. For this notorious deed England knighted him and made him Lieutenant Governor of Jamaica.

I was so delighted with new Panama, the capital of the republic, that I spent more than two weeks there. I never saw such a conglomeration of races anywhere

outside of Alexandria, Egypt. There are Spaniards, Negroes, Indians, Chinese, Japanese and Hindus. In fact, every race in the world could be seen on its crowded streets. The Indians and Spaniards have intermarried, and they predominate. Their men are handsome, and their women are surely beautiful, with golden skin, black hair and large eyes. In the city, the Panamanians possess a higher average of intelligence than you will find elsewhere in South America.

The man who toils with his hands receives an average wage of ten dollars a week, but he can live about seventy-five percent cheaper there than in the United States. House rent is from five to ten dollars a month. A bushel basket of vegetables can be purchased for twenty-five cents, fish costs from three to five cents a pound and five cents' worth of fruit will last an average family two days. The climate is so mild and even that top coats and wraps are not needed. I am told that the women wear only one piece of clothing. Clothing is much better and cheaper in Panama than in the United States. The import duty is only 15 percent. I bought a large-sized heavy linen suit for nine dollars and two Panama hats for $3.75 each. The Knox Hat Company in New York valued them at $24.00 each.

Panama is one of the healthiest places in the world. Tuberculosis is an unknown disease among the natives. Years ago the United States Government built a tubercular sanitarium in the Canal Zone. Up to 1936, it had had only three patients. These had tuberculosis when they arrived in Panama. The natives are not victims of

the "white plague" because they dress thinly, leave their doors and windows open night and day, eat fruit, fish and vegetables instead of red meats and, best of all, everybody in Panama gets plenty of rest. Those living in the city take three hours off for lunch in the middle of the day—about the only time it is hot there. I made two fifty-mile excursions into the country; judging from what I saw, the country people work less than three hours a day. The land, like the land of the Nile Delta, is so rich that they do not have to attend the crops. They plant, sleep, wake up, reap and eat.

The United States Government has built good roads into the interior. To keep the cattle from being killed by automobiles, these roads are wired on both sides. The land is so fertile that the posts planted to hold the wires have in many cases grown into trees. I was in Panama three times during the depression, but the people there did not seem to know anything about a depression. I never heard a Panamanian ask for something to eat. Fruit falls from the trees and grows on the ground every month of the year in great abundance. I ate watermelon fresh from the vine on the fourteenth day of February. When I embarked that last night on a Panama Pacific ship for home, I said to myself, "If my country ever sends me into exile, I hope they drop me off at Panama."

On reaching the port of New York I discovered that four months of cruising around the South and North Americas had not lessened my desire to retire from the active pastorate.

A. Clayton Powell, Jr., had led the church most successfully during my absence, and I made no attempt to take the reins out of his hands. All the details of the educational, social and religious programs of the institution were worked out and directed by him. To be sure, he was pastor not in name but in deed, while I was the advisor in difficult problems and the leader in big things.

The biggest accomplishment in which I figured during 1936 was the sending of Miss Marguerite Virginia Wood abroad to continue her study of music. Miss Wood had been the efficient and versatile girls' worker at Abyssinian Church for five years, during which time she had majored in music at Columbia University. Her teachers were so impressed with her ability that they suggested and urged that she continue the development of her talents in the Old World. I was made chairman of an inter-racial committee which arranged a recital for her at Abyssinian Church. The main auditorium was packed and $1,040.00 was realized. The editor of the *Worker*, a magazine published in Washington, D. C., was present, and the reader will be interested in his description and comment which follow:

"The Abyssinian Baptist Church in New York City is not only the greatest church among Negroes, but it does some of the most unusual things. It has just gone and done something that no Negro Church in the world has ever done. It hired and paid a young woman, Miss M. Virginia Wood, to direct its young people's

work. She has been with them five years and has done a marvelous piece of work.

"Miss Wood graduated, June 2, from Columbia University, majoring in Music. She is talented. She wanted to study abroad. Her teachers urged her to go. It takes real money to study in Vienna. Miss Wood did not have it. Abyssinian decided that she would give a testimonial and raise it. Dr. A. Clayton Powell, the Christian miracle worker, was asked to act as chairman. A fine committee was appointed to work with him. June 1 was the night of the recital. The church was packed. They gave Miss Wood enough money to spend a year or two under the finest teachers in Vienna. She sailed June 5.

"Young people, don't let anybody tell you that church folks won't stand by you. Abyssinia showered gifts upon this young woman because she gave them fine, faithful service and was happy in it.

"The other lesson which we learn from the Abyssinian experiment is that if the pastor leads courageously, the people will follow gladly. That entire church was ablaze. Miss Wood's talent made many white friends for her. They were there working and cheering."

Miss Wood studied under the best teachers for two years (1936 to 1938) at Salzburg, Vienna and Milan. The church and pastor have helped to educate dozens of young people including Shirley Graham, Victoria White, Ruth Morris and Winifred Norris, but Miss

Wood is the first student to be sent abroad by any Negro organization.

In the early weeks of 1937, I was invited by the Program Committee to deliver one of the principal addresses at the annual session of the Northern Baptist Convention. This is perhaps the greatest honor of its kind bestowed upon me during my long ministry. The Convention opened May 20, in the spacious and beautiful Municipal Auditorium of Philadelphia, which accommodates fifteen thousand people. When I was introduced to speak that evening, there were present at least ten thousand Baptists from every state from Maine to California, besides those from foreign countries. The committee had asked me to speak on the subject, "The Negro's Enrichment of the Church of Today." Most of this address was published in the *Watchman-Examiner* and is here republished with the permission of that magazine:

"All close students of religion and psychology agree that the Negro is enriching the church by his meekness, his simple, childlike faith and above all by his generous emotional nature.

"The Negro race in America has preserved itself as a messenger of meekness to the church, by manifesting under the most trying conditions the spirit of the meek and lowly Jesus.

"There are just two methods of conquest. One is by physical might and the other is by spiritual meekness. The Jews were the ancient exponents of physical might

and they illustrate its utter failure as a method of conquest. The Jews fought the wild savage warriors of Canaan, including the Philistine giants, they matched swords with the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians and Egyptians. They finally met the battering rams of the mighty Roman legions and their national life was annihilated. For nineteen centuries the Jews have been the butt of every nation's ridicule and persecution. They took the sword and perished nationally by the sword.

"Jesus was the outstanding exponent of spiritual meekness. Jesus advocated the policy of non-resistance. If a man compels you to go a mile with him, go two. If he takes your coat, give him your cloak also. If he slaps you on one side of the face, turn the other. If you are reviled, revile not again. Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them that despitefully use you. Jesus is the author of the philosophy of meekness and this philosophy finds its best expression in the words, 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.' The world is not old enough or wise enough to say that the philosophy of Jesus will not finally triumph. We can say at least this much—the philosophy of might has not triumphed.

"Germany followed the philosophy of Nietzsche that 'might makes right' and this philosophy was supported by the best organized army that ever obeyed the command—'Forward march.' I need not tell you that the army was demoralized and the colossal House of the Hohenzollerns, which was built upon Nietzsche's

philosophy, came down with a crash which is still echoing around the world.

"The American Indians attempted to survive by bow and arrow and tomahawk and the white man drove them across the continent from Plymouth Rock to the Pacific Coast and today they are a pitiful remnant and a racial nonentity. About the same time the Indian met the white man at Plymouth Rock, a handful of Negroes came in contact with him at Jamestown. These Negroes adopted the philosophy of the meekness of Jesus and today they are twelve million strong, with thousands of educated men and women practicing in nearly all the professions, possessing more than a billion dollars worth of property and exercising tremendous political, moral and religious influence in the nation. Had not thousands of Negro ministers preached the meekness of Jesus to their people, they would have long ago suffered the tragic fate of the Indians. The history of the colored race in America has proven conclusively that the weakest race can conquer by stooping. If the hot-headed radicals of the North disagree with this philosophy, let them go to Waycross, Ga., or Miami, Fla., and preach the conquest of the white man by physical violence and they will not only destroy themselves but their own race which is making progress with fear and trembling.

"If the churches of all peoples will learn from the history of the Negro that the weapons of their warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the

pulling down of strongholds, they will be greatly enriched in living and serving.

"Dr. Edwin A. Lee, Professor of Education and Director of the Division of Vocational Education of the University of California, said in a magazine article last month that 'the Negro has a faith that nothing can destroy.' It is his opinion that the Negro's 'greatest gift to humanity resides in the realm of faith.' After working with the Negro people for more than a half century, I am not prepared to say with Dr. Lee that faith will be the Negro's greatest gift to humanity, but I do agree that the Negro has a faith that nothing can destroy: a faith worthy of emulation by all the churches of today. The great majority of Negroes still cling with a childlike faith to the religion expressed in their spirituals. These spirituals are the finest revelation of the will and heart of God outside of the Bible. There is not a line of revenge or a word that breathes the spirit of vindictiveness in any of these original folk songs. The Negro never attempts to get even with his enemies. He acts upon the holy assumption: 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.'

"When he is slandered by newspapers, magazines, books and groups, he sings:

> You may talk about me just as much as you please,
> But I'll talk about you when I get on my knees.

"I have attended mass metings where firebrand orators tried to fan their hearers into an angry flame by lurid descriptions of segregation, discrimination, dis-

franchisement, lynching and all other injustices from which the Negro suffers. Did they go out with torches and guns to get revenge? No. Instead they stood up and sang:

He sees all you do,
He hears all you say,
My Lord's a-writin' all the time.

"In times of greatest frustration, when it seems that all earthly pillars of support are crumbling, he sings:

I'm so glad trouble don't last always.

"During the last fifteen years I have been in anti-war meetings where all the horrors of war were described and again and again some Negro choir would answer the speakers by singing:

I'm goin' to lay down my sword and shield
Down by the riverside,
I ain't goin' study war no more.

"The Negro is the most heavenly minded man in the world. Heaven is more real to him than Philadelphia. During the last twenty-five years millions of people have lost God and the concept of immortality, but the Negro still believes and sings:

I looked over Jordan and what did I see?
A band of angels comin' after me.
Swing low, sweet chariot, comin' for to carry me home.

"Dr. Henry C. Link can 'Return to Religion' but the Negro cannot return to religion for the good rea-

son that he has never left religion. Religion is in his blood and bones. He is religious even when he is drunk. A Washington, D. C., Negro minister told me a few years ago that he was awakened at daylight one Sunday morning by a beautiful tenor voice. When he looked out the window he saw a drunken colored man staggering from one side of the street to the other singing:

Hallelujah, hallelujah to the Lamb,
All my sins have been forgiven and
Jesus made me just what I am.

"You can put all the Negro atheists, agnostics and humanists in America on the main floor of this hall and then have room enough to turn an eight-horse wagon around without touching a single person. The Negro does not try to rationalize God, the Bible and religion, but by faith he accepts all three. We are reading books and articles every week on the passing of the old time power and the old time revivals of the church. The old time power and the old time revivals have gone because we have lost faith in the old time Bible, the old time religion and the old time God. Why not try the simple faith in God that is still crowding the Negro churches and adding thousands to the membership roll every year? God is teaching us through the Negro race that faith is still the victory that overcometh the world.

"We come now to what I consider the richest element in the Negro's life; namely, his extravagant

emotionalism. We have learned from Freud and other modern psychologists the evil effect of suppressed emotions. I have often wondered what would have happened to the Negro if the church had not given him the opportunity to sing off, pray off, and shout off his suppressed emotion. During my long ministry, I have heard thousands of testimonies like the following, 'I intended to commit suicide, I intended to kill a man who had wronged me, I intended to sell myself, I intended to give up God and the church, but after hearing the sermon, the prayers, the singing, I changed my mind.'

"Now, what kept these Negroes from exploding? They found an outlet for their emotionalism in a Negro church service and they came away with a better poise and a saner intention.

"To hear of a Negro church-goer committing suicide is one of the rarest things connected with Negro church history. The Negro church has proved to be a safety valve for the over-heated emotions of Negroes. They find relief in the stirring sermon, the fervent prayer, the lusty singing and the vociferous amens and hallelujahs.

"A few high-brow Negroes and white iceberg religionists decry the emotional religion of the Negro but scholars and long observers like Benjamin Kidd and E. Stanley Jones say that 'emotionalism is the greatest thing in the world.' Emotionalism is the electric current in the organized Christian church.

"It was my privilege to introduce Dr. E. Stanley

Jones two years ago at a mass meeting in Harlem. During that address he said, 'The emotionalism expressed in the Negro "sorrow songs," prayers and sermons will yet be a benediction to the world.' Every race which has come in contact with Bible religion except the Negro race has made a contribution to it.

"The Jews taught us that a nation as well as an individual may serve God. This was not only expressed in the dictum of their outstanding prophet, 'Righteousness exalteth a nation,' but it was exemplified by their national life. Old Thomas Carlyle says, 'David's life was a succession of falls,' which is equal to saying it was a succession of get ups. This may be applied with equal truth to the life of the nation. For centuries, the pendulum of Hebrew national life swung between righteousness and sin. When they served God as a nation, oceans fled before their presence, rivers rolled back, the wheels in the timepiece of creation stood still, and no power in the universe could resist their onward march. When they wandered away from God, they were treated more scurvily than the dogs which ate crumbs from the tables of heathen tyrants. While there is not a Christian nation on earth today, the fact remains that the Jews have taught us that a nation can be and should be a Christian in all of its political, diplomatic, social and economic relations. The Jews nationalized religion.

"Rome was noted for its genius of organization. The morning the angels sang at Bethlehem the civilized world was under the organized power of Rome.

When Christianity reached Rome a few years later, the old Romans, true to their disposition to organize everything with which they came in contact, proceeded to form a world-wide Christian organization. The Roman Catholic Church is the oldest, the most powerful and perfect organization in the civilized world of today. All organized governments are weak compared to it and no other ecclesiastical organization can approach it in perfection. It is the only organization in Christendom that can say to its members, 'Come,' and they will come; 'Go,' and they will go. The Pope sits in the Vatican on the Tiber and issues orders which are obeyed with mathematical exactness not only by the humblest priest in the farthest nook of the earth, but by bishops and cardinals. The unpardonable sin in the Catholic Church is for a member to disobey his priest. The Romans organized religion.

"The Greeks were the most intellectual people who have yet appeared on the globe. They tried to furnish an ultimate, rational explanation for all things and they came very near succeeding. Their philosophy is still studied in our schools and in many respects it seems to be the last word. Our philosophy of religion as taught in the theological seminaries today came from the Greeks. Their system of thinking has taught us that it is a reasonable thing to trust God and to present our bodies to Him as a living sacrifice. The Greeks philosophized religion.

"It remained for the Anglo-Saxon to individualize religion. When the Pilgrim Fathers landed at Plym-

outh Rock, they threw off the power of popes, priests and potentates and declared that every man has a right to worship God according to his own conscience. Whatever may be said to discredit the American people, the world is eternally indebted to these early seekers after freedom of conscience for the religious liberty enjoyed today.

"To summarize: the Jews nationalized religion; the Romans organized religion; the Greeks philosophized religion; the Anglo-Saxons individualized religion.

"Now, what contribution will the colored man make to religion?

"I believe that the colored people are going to emotionalize religion. They possess enough emotion to move the world, when it is properly confined and directed. The serious religious thinker criticizes colored people not because they are emotional, but because of the way they express their emotions. Electricity is the most useful thing yet discovered. When it leaps from the skies, splits trees, burns up houses and knocks people down, we are startled and frightened and declare that it is a bad thing, but the scientific thinker knows that we are mistaken. Confine it to batteries, dynamos and wires and this wild, frightful something runs our trains, drives our automobiles, propels our ships and flying machines, makes our cities and homes look like noonday at midnight, annihilates time and space and brings New York and South Africa within whispering distance of each other.

"When you see colored people leaping and jump-

ing, running and shouting in the midst of some great religious service, the thing which moves them is not to be either crushed or criticized. Wait until they are properly refined, cultured and directed and that thing which makes them go wild and knock people down who happen to be in their way will yet make the Christian church throb with power and vibrate with progress. Those who decry the emotionalism of the colored man are not serious students of psychology, philosophy or religion. Sympathy and love are the greatest of the emotions and these are the outstanding features of the colored man's psychology. He is the most sympathetic and loving being on earth. He represents the only race that has enough love to love its enemies.

"Other races kill their enemies in pogroms, blood purges and war.

"I can never be moved from the opinion that the colored man was placed in America by the providence of God to teach the white man the meaning of genuine love and sympathy. It will require at least 500 more years to prove whether the Negro race can equal the present leading races in political, educational and commercial progress, but in love and sympathy the Negro race is already superior to the great civilized races of the earth, for the one who loves is always superior to the one who hates.

"Here in this presence, as a humble representative of six million Negro church members, we rededicate ourselves to continue to set an example to the churches

of today in spiritual meekness, unshrinking faith in the providence of Almighty God, and to practice that tender religious emotionalism which broke the heart of the Man of Galilee and made Him weep over the sins of Jerusalem 1900 years ago. As a financially poor race, we say, 'Silver and gold have we none, but such as we have we give unto thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up, do justly, love mercy and walk humbly before thy God.' "

For compliments and congratulations this address was the climax to my long speaking career. From nearly every officer of the Convention and from many delegates throughout the country came letters of commendation. Two of these letters stated that the address had advanced the stock of the Negro race. I quote briefly from some of the printed comments:

"The address which Dr. Powell delivered ought to be heard by all of our people."—The *Watchman-Examiner.*

"The president presented the principal speaker of the evening, Dr. A. Clayton Powell, Sr., introducing him as the pastor of the largest Protestant church in the world. Dr. Powell received a great ovation at the beginning and at the close of his message. Not even for Daniel Poling did the Convention rise and stand as it did to receive this man and his message with such enthusiasm, for they applauded him as he spoke." —The *Christian Review.*

"It was a dramatic moment for the great audience assembled for the first evening session of the Northern Baptist Convention in Philadelphia. On the platform as one of the speakers of the evening was the veteran Negro minister, Rev. A. Clayton Powell, for twenty-eight years pastor of the great Abyssinian Baptist Church in the Harlem district of New York City. His first words were not part of the address he had prepared. This is what he said:

'I have waited forty-five years for an opportunity to express thanks to you for what you have done for my race in general and for me in particular.

'In 1892 I received two diplomas from Virginia Union University, a school founded and fostered by the white Baptists of the North. The four years I spent at the University cost me $80.00 in cash. In June 1935 I gave the University one thousand dollars as a part payment for value received. Tonight I make a further payment of my indebtedness by presenting to the Northern Baptist Convention Budget a check for one hundred dollars.'

"The applause that greeted Mr. Powell was tremendous and in that moment I was proud to think through the years my church had helped to make possible the work that Northern Baptist through their Board of Education do to provide the Negroes with tained leadership.

"Virginia Union University, Mr. Powell's alma mater, was formed by the union of three schools. One of these began in 'Lumpkins jail,' the old slave pen.

The first pupils were of all ages and could neither read nor write. Today there are courses such as the best institutions offer, a highly trained faculty and an alert, intelligent body of students. Virginia Union is accorded the same rating as the best white colleges in the South. It has graduated more men for the ministry than any other Negro Southern school."—*I Discover My Church.* (A booklet published annually by the Northern Baptist Convention.)

On my return from Philadelphia the last week in May, I made a second attempt to retire from the active pastorate of the Abyssinian Church. The resignation this time was read to the Joint Boards with the hope that they would go to the church in favor of my retirement, but they refused absolutely to present the resignation to the church.

The first Sunday in September, 1937, in spite of the advice and protest of the Joint Boards, I read my resignation to the church, stating that an active ministry of twenty-nine years would terminate November 1 of that year, regardless of the vote of the officers and members. Two weeks later I was unanimously made pastor emeritus and given a monthly pension for life starting November 1, 1937. So far as Negro Baptist history goes, there were three unique things connected with my retirement. First, if any other Negro Baptist preacher ever spent two and a half years begging a church to accept his resignation, finally having to force the officers and members to do so by what

resembles steam-roller methods, I have not met anyone old enough to remember it. Next, there is no record in Negro Baptist history of a church providing its retiring minister and his wife with a home and ample means to support them during life. And finally, the delightful ease with which the mantle was transferred from father to son has no parallel.

The night the church made me pastor emeritus, the Joint Boards were appointed by the church to recommend another pastor. Two weeks from that night in the same room, members stood in the aisles and against the walls and listened to the Joint Boards unanimously recommend A. Clayton Powell, Jr., to become pastor of the Abyssinian Church as of November 1, 1937. The nominating speech, by general agreement, was made by Lieutenant Emanuel Kline and is published here in part because it acquaints the reader with the fitness of my successor:

"The Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., the only son of Dr. and Mrs. Powell, was born on November 29, 1908 at New Haven, Connecticut. He accompanied his parents to New York at the age of five months, when his father accepted the pastorate of this church.

"The Reverend Mr. Powell, Jr., received his elementary education in the public schools of New York City. He was graduated with honors in religion and philosophy from Colgate University at Hamilton, New York, with a B.A. degree. Two years later, Columbia University conferred upon him the degree of Master

of Arts. He received his theological training at Union Seminary in this city.

"As a supplement to his formal training, he spent more than three months in intensive study abroad, during which time he visited most of the continent of Europe, part of northern Africa and the Holy Land.

"The Reverend Mr. Powell, Jr., entered the service of this institution on October 1, 1930, as corporation manager and was ordained eight months later when he became assistant pastor. Under his able leadership and directorship the following innovations to our programs were inaugurated: the Leaders Council, the Sunday School Superintendents Council, the General Teachers Council, and the Youth Fellowship Council.

"He assisted in the reorganizing of the Young People's Choir and the organizing of the Tiny Tots Choir. He organized and directed the world's largest school of adult education—that at Abyssinia. He instituted a free nursery for the accommodation of more than one hundred children. It was he who organized the new members' 'Get-Together' and the 'Men's Assembly.'

"He organized and directed relief for all Harlem during the years 1930, 1931 and 1932. He conducted the first successful campaign for Negroes in employment during the year 1935 and as a result of his efforts, members of our group have been permanently employed in such establishments as Sobol Bros., a gasoline corporation, various stores in 125th Street and throughout Harlem. Through his personal and untiring efforts

many other positions, such as in the Bank of Manhattan and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, have been filled by persons upon his recommendation. In most cases, members of our church were the first to be benefitted.

"It has been generally conceded by both officers and members that no individual member in the past five years has made a larger contribution to the program of this institution than has been made by the wife of our junior pastor. This fact is proved by the organization of the Social Service Commission, which raises more than $1600 annually and distributes more than $800 in money and property to the poor and needy of our community. The personal and social needs of our inmates at the A. C. P. Home for the Aged are cared for at an expense of more than one thousand dollars annually by the Junior League which was organized by Mrs. Powell.

"We, your Pulpit Committee composed of the Joint Boards, feel that no one in training or experience can qualify like the Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., to become the successor of his father in the pulpit of the Abyssinian Baptist Church. I therefore move, Mr. Moderator, that the recommendation presented by your Pulpit Committee shall be approved and adopted."

As the Lieutenant finished, half the audience seconded the nomination. When the Moderator asked for other nominations, the audience laughed. There was not a dissenting voice or vote in either the meetings of

the Joint Boards or the church. This seems almost a miracle when it is recalled that the church has fourteen thousand members, representing every stratum of life. The transition was so fine and harmonious that no one can tell even unto this day where the father's work ended or where the son's work began.

I realize that many things helped create the atmosphere in which this serious change was made so pleasantly, but I think the major factor was this: I never attempted at any time to build the Abyssinian Church around myself, but for twenty-nine years I worked day and night to build it around Jesus Christ. If a pastor builds a church on himself or around himself, the church will go when he goes, but if he builds the church on Christ and around Christian principles, the gates of hell cannot prevail against it because it is founded on a Rock.

"Twenty-nine Years Ago and Today" was the subject of my closing message on Sunday, October 31, 1937. The reader will find here expressed in a few sentences what it took me half an hour to say at that time:

Twenty-nine years ago the church owed $146,354.00. Today it owns property free and clear of debt and other assets worth about $400,000.00.

Twenty-nine years ago it had a membership of 1,600. Its membership today is 14,000.

Twenty-nine years ago its budget was $6,000.00 including the interest on big mortgages. Today its budget is $35,000.00.

Twenty-nine years ago it had one pastor. Today it has three pastors and nineteen other paid workers.

Twenty-nine years ago it did not have a Bible class. Today it has seven Bible classes, the largest adult education school and the largest teacher training school in the United States.

Twenty-nine years ago we had a Sunday school of about 200. Today our Sunday school numbers 1,600 pupils and 142 teachers and officers.

Twenty-nine years ago it had one club doing social work. Today it is considered the largest and most effective social, religious and educational institution in the world.

The church has at least four objectives:

First, to give the Negroes in America a model church.

Second, to teach Negroes the value of punctuality.

Third, to help establish a better relationship between the white and colored races.

Fourth, to establish the Kingdom of social justice.

While these objectives have not been completely attained, the following facts will show that we have made great progress toward these goals.

No Sunday service has been five minutes late in twenty-nine years.

People of all races from all parts of the world come to Harlem to study our buildings and program, with the hope of improving such undertakings in their communities.

No church, white or colored, has a greater Youth Day service than the one held at Abyssinia quarterly.

The church not only trains the young, but it cares for the aged and poor. We have a Home for the Aged on St. Nicholas Avenue and 147th Street that cost $40,000.00. In addition to the Deacons' Fund to help the needy, we have a Social Service Commission under the leadership of Mrs. Isabel Powell that raised $1,600.00 last year to assist the worthy poor, regardless of their church connections.

After this summing up, my final message was concluded with these lines:

"During these twenty-nine years my faith has been greatly strengthened in the power of the unmuzzled, unshackled Gospel. It was the power of the Gospel that destroyed enmities, broke down factions and united the church in the bond of peace. It was the power of the Gospel that drew these crowds and gave us money to meet our tremendous obligations. It was the power of the Gospel that brought 17,000 new members into the fellowship of the church and molded many of the old members into splendid and useful Christian characters.

"I have learned during these twenty-nine years that if you let the Gospel run, it will still work miracles. It will make bad men good and good men better. It will make deaf men hear, blind men see, dumb men sing, sad men happy, old men young, sick men well and dead men live.

It makes the wounded spirit whole,
And calms the troubled breast;
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary rest.

"All things must come to an end on this earth, and today is the end of my active ministry in the Abyssinian Baptist Church. Tomorrow the mantle falls upon A. Clayton Powell, Jr., who becomes the eighteenth pastor of this historic church. God is my witness that I did not ask anybody to vote for him or work for his election. I gave him an opportunity seven years ago and he has made good. Since he is elected, I can say now without being misunderstood that there is no other preacher in the world so well qualified to continue the great work at Abyssinia as A. Clayton Powell, Jr. I have just one thing to say to him in this closing message: 'Preach with all the power of your soul, body and mind the old-time simple Gospel because it is a fountain for the unclean, food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, clothing for the naked, strength for the weak, a solace for the sorrowing, medicine for the sick and eternal life for the dying. Preach it until every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord and Christ. Preach it until your tongue is paralyzed in death and the Son of God shall say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

'May the Captain who has brought me safely into port despite swift tides, strong, contrary winds, tidal waves and tempestuous seas be your Captain.

'I offer for you and the church the prayer of L. B. R. Briggs.'"

The Pilgrims' faith, the Pilgrims' courage grant us;
Still shines the truth that for the Pilgrims shone.
We are His seed; nor life nor death shall daunt us,
The port is freedom! Pilgrim heart, sail on!

Chapter II

ESTIMATIONS OF THE SAILOR

I always think of you as a great vessel guided by God, with Mrs. Powell at your side as the little tug. You have surely made a safe voyage. May God bless, keep and preserve you and cause His face to shine upon you.

Bettie Ellis

THE evening of November 1, 1937 furnished a glorious climax to my active pastorate of the Abyssinian Baptist Church.

Mr. A. M. Wendell Malliet, a feature writer of the *Amsterdam News*, was present, and I quote from him in part:

"More than 3,000 friends and admirers of the Rev. A. Clayton Powell, Sr. rose to their feet and cheered for many minutes when the venerable leader and his wife entered Abyssinian Baptist Church Monday night, on the occasion of the retirement reception which was held in their honor.

"Hailed as 'one of the greatest social scientists, philanthropist and minister of religion,' the 72 year

old Harlem leader heard himself called 'one of the greatest men now living.'

"Police Lieutenant Emanuel Kline, who was master of ceremonies, in speaking of the Rev. Mr. Powell, declared: 'Only when the Great Commander of us all sees fit to endow every president, every senator, every governor, every mayor and every minister in these United States with the wisdom, courage and character of the Rev. Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., will we have the perfect state.'

"The Rev. Charles H. Sears, white, of the Baptist City Mission Society, who spoke on behalf of the clergy of Greater New York, referred to him as 'a man of stalwart character, as strong as Gibraltar.'

"Among the other speakers were the Rev. W. P. Hayes, pastor of Bethany Baptist Church, Newark, who spoke for the Harlem clergy; Miss Olivia Stokes represented the youth of the church; Fred R. Moore, editor of The New York Age, spoke on behalf of the people of the community; W. C. Cole represented the men of the church; and Mrs. Anna C. Perry spoke for the women of the Abyssinian Congregation."

Following are the texts of all these speeches except the one by Hon. Fred R. Moore which was delivered without notes.

Lieutenant Kline said:

"Well do each of you know that we have gathered here this evening to pay honor to one of the greatest social workers who has ever attempted to teach the

masses how to apply the principles of social sciences to every day life.

"We are here to honor one of the greatest philanthropists who ever served humanity.

"We are here because we desire to honor one of the greatest ministers that has ever occupied any pulpit anywhere.

"Dr. Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., has been serving his people, through the medium of the ministry, for more than fifty years. During that time he has directed the building of two churches, one of which is this beautiful edifice in which we are now assembled. He was never selfish, because he has assisted in the erection of many other institutions of this kind. He has, as most of you know, pointed thousands of individuals to the Christian life.

"By the grace of God he has given to his race a son whom he has trained and prepared to carry on his life's work.

"In recognition of his splendid contribution, Howard University at Washington has conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. He has been honored with the Harmon Award. Thousands of newspapers and magazines have heralded his good works throughout the length and breadth of this and foreign lands.

"He has taught our people the necessity of taking a more definite interest in our political government, such as exercising their right of franchise in the election of our federal, state and municipal officials. He has been

both a friend and a pastor to all of our public officials and especially to your police force. He is the only minister of our race who has ever openly from his pulpit and otherwise defended the police at a time when he thought that they were being persecuted for attempting to do their sworn duty.

"And please be informed that every law-enforcement officer of your great city, from your Police Commissioner down through the ranks, is his friend.

"Tonight after these ceremonies shall have been ended, the Rev. Dr. Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., will upon his personal application retire from the active pastorate of this church. However, we his friends, followers and admirers will find solace and joy in the fact that as long as his heart beats, as long as there are red corpuscles in his veins, as long as he is able to speak, he will never, never cease to direct men and women, both individually and collectively, to that eternal road of righteousness and truth.

"Whenever in His divine wisdom, the High Commander of us all shall see fit to endow every president, every senator, every congressman of these great United States of ours and every governor, every state legislator of our forty-eight states, every mayor, alderman or councilman of the cities, towns and villages of our country, every minister of the Gospel with the courage, wisdom, sincerity of purpose and the character of Dr. Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., then and not until then, shall we have a perfect state."

Mr. Walker C. Cole represented the men as follows:

"It is certainly fitting and proper for us to assemble here on this occasion to honor and pay homage to this marvelous man, Dr. A. Clayton Powell.

"We have before us his record of twenty-nine years of successful administration as pastor of this church. His accomplishments stand out as conspicuously as the Andes Mountains; therefore, it is not necessary to make any arguments in this connection. Yes, we have his record before us to which we point with pride. Nevertheless, we love to talk about it, first, because we know it's true, and secondly, because it is pleasant to repeat.

"An analysis of the twenty-nine years of his successful administration reveals six contributing factors, namely; one, he is an executive of the first order; two, he is a man with a vision; three, he is a man of courage; four, he is an honest man; five, he is a man of God. The sixth will be mentioned later. Let us consider Dr. Powell according to these factors.

"As an *executive*—when Dr. Powell took charge of this church down in West 40th Street, one of the first matters that claimed his attention was the auditing of the books and accounts; this resulted in the installation of a modern accounting system. He followed up this line of procedure until the thing he desired in the way of keeping records was completed. The accounting system having been installed, he obtained reports weekly from the trustees as to the receipts and pay-

ments; and from the treasurer, the deposits. In fact, the treasurer would show him the pass book each week after the deposit had been made. From that time up until now, the books of this church have been audited by an accountant and not by an auditing committee. The insistence on such a procedure as I have just described is characteristic of an executive of the first order. This is why the men of this church say he is an executive of the first order.

"As a man of *vision*—this factor is an axiom; therefore, it does not need to be discussed.

"As a man of *courage*—Dr. Powell always took the membership into his confidence. He never concealed nor did he attempt to conceal any matters affecting the welfare or the best interest of the church. Whenever he found a situation even of the most delicate character affecting the welfare or the best interest of the church, he tackled it with all of the vim and vigor he could command. I have in mind three instances, but it is not necessary to go into details at this time. This is why the men of this church say Dr. Powell is a man of courage.

"As an *honest man*—during the building of this church and community house our receipts averaged $90,000.00 a year. An official receipt was written and given to each person who made a payment to this fund at the time the payment was made.

"Furthermore, Dr. Powell was given a report showing not only the accumulated total of the building fund for each week, but also the progress during the week.

After these buildings were completed, equipped and dedicated, an audit was made by one of the largest accounting firms in the city. The name of this firm is Haskins and Sells. This firm was procured not because we did not have men in our own group who could do the work just as efficiently, but because it was desired to have it done by someone who was an absolute stranger to the chairman, the secretary, and the treasurer who had charge of these funds.

"The report was made on the audit to the pastor just before he sailed for the Holy Land; every dollar of the $335,000.00, the cost of the buildings and equipment was accounted for. So Dr. Powell sailed the next day feeling that his life's ambition had been partly realized. He was happy that there was no financial scandal connected with the erection of these buildings. Again, we say that a man who insists on following such a procedure as I have outlined is not only an executive of the first order, but is an honest man. This is why the men of this church say Dr. Powell is an honest man.

"As a man of *God*—Dr. Powell's sermons have worked wonders. It is said that college English differs from business English only in purpose; that the purpose of college English is to entertain, whereas the purpose of business English is to move people to do something. For example, college English is used in writing a poem or delivering an oration, but business English is used by the manufacturer who writes a sales letter to move people to buy his merchandise, and it

is used by the collection department of a store to move people to pay for the goods they have bought.

"Many examples can be cited to prove the statement that college and business English differ only in purpose.

"All sermons delivered by ministers or preachers fall into one of these classifications. A large number of preachers deliver sermons for the purpose of entertaining their audiences. The sermons delivered by Dr. Powell fall in the classification of business English, the purpose of which is to move people to do something.

"It was Dr. Powell's sermons that moved the members to build and equip this church and community house at a cost of $335,000.00 of which every dollar was paid within four years after their dedication; it was Dr. Powell's sermons that moved the membership of this church to buy and equip a home for our aged members at a cost of $40,000.00, of which every dollar has been paid; it was Dr. Powell's sermons that moved this church to establish the Chair of Religious Education at Virginia Union University, in Richmond, Virginia; it was Dr. Powell's sermons that moved this church to pay the salaries of missionaries in Africa. This is why the men of this church say Dr. Powell is a man of God, 'for no man can do the things that thou doest except God be with him.'

"The sixth contributing factor is Mrs. Powell, Sr. The men of this church are mindful of the fact that you, Mrs. Powell, are one of the contributing factors in connection with the twenty-nine years of Dr. Powell's successful administration as pastor of this

church. We recall that you sat in conference with our Building Committee when it was considering the matter of erecting these buildings, even before the architect had been selected.

"Mr. Chairman, it was amazing to see how conversant Mrs. Powell was on the subject of building; not just one phase of it, but every phase. Many of her suggestions were embodied in the plans and the results can be seen in these buildings. In our conferences, Mrs. Powell talked so fast that frequently I was forced to ask her to repeat in order that I might get her suggestions in the records for the architect. Mrs. Powell, the men of this church are very happy to have this privilege of telling you publicly that you are one of the contributing factors in connection with the twenty-nine years of Dr. Powell's successful administration as pastor of this church."

Miss Olivia Stokes voiced the sentiments of the young people in these words:

"It affords me the greatest pleasure to speak on this auspicious occasion in the life of Dr. and Mrs. Powell. To the committee that selected me to speak for the youth of Abyssinia, my thanks for your consideration and confidence.

"Twenty-nine years of service to any good cause should be commended. But twenty-nine years to the service of building God's kingdom on earth and in the hearts of men by a man who has done such an

outstanding job is deserving of the highest praise of youth.

"While constantly building during the past quarter of a century, Dr. and Mrs. Powell have not forgotten to take into consideration the youth surrounding them. Tonight the young people stand out among those who regret that such things as age or long service force one to retire.

"Dr. Powell, during the past twenty-nine years the young people of Abyssinian Baptist Church have taken you as their counselor, their understanding pastor and their confidential friend. Our most personal questions and experiences were often exposed to you in the hope that you might point the way. And you did!

"The one thing more than any other that has made you even until this day a most popular favorite among young people has been your constant demand that youth have a definite part in any planning that would affect them in any way. You welcomed our suggestions with a receptive heart.

"Let's review briefly some of the more tangible accomplishments for young people during the past three decades.

"First, the most pertinent accomplishment is the maintenance of a Boys' and Girls' Departments, both with paid, trained leadership on the regular church staff. Those who participated—and large numbers did —will recall with great joy and satisfaction those glorious days.

"As a young woman said the other day, 'I enjoyed church then. I thought there was no other place to go.'

"We can say with credit to your wise judgment that the boys' groups were just as strong as the girls'.

"Second, under your leadership and guidance many young people have found excellent opportunities in different areas of life. Excellent examples are A. J. Payne, Marshall Shepard, Clarence Chick, Marguerite V. Wood, Horatio Hill, A. Clayton Powell, Jr., and many others filling important positions.

"Third, while Dr. Powell has been greatly concerned with meeting the problems of his own young people, he has not forgotten those fellow youths across the sea in pagan Africa. If they might be here tonight —and no doubt they will be paying tribute at an early date to this honored man—they would probably say with all sincerity, 'Dr. Powell, we thank you with all our hearts and minds for your consideration of us as God's people, entitled to the right to know that Jesus Christ died for all. We thank you for the right to live and learn our value and therefore help stop mass exploitation of our material resources, physical strength and mental abilities. We thank you for the lives of devoted, unselfish, loving Christian messengers such as Sarah C. Williamson, Mattie Mae Davis and Ruth Morris.'

"Fourth, the man we are honoring tonight has been a great influence in helping young white people realize that there are intelligent youth in the Negro race. He reached his climax, several people have said, last No-

vember, 1936, when very forcefully he told a white group of well-to-do youth that Negro youth asked no favors of them except an open door and an equal opportunity.

"Fifth, whenever politics presented an opportunity for clean government, the cry of all youth today, Dr. Powell has been there to use his vote and voice. We can truthfully say he has kept abreast of immediate and important issues of the hour as they affect the Negro youth.

"Dr. Powell was farsighted indeed when he saw to it that the church provided a home for those active church youth who some day would grow old.

"Youth (especially the girls) would be unfair in praising only Dr. Powell. It is as true as old that behind every great man there is an even greater woman. This both old and young alike can say of Mrs. Mattie Fletcher Powell. No woman could have worked harder in her day than did she. The M. F. P. Volunteer Club stands as a monument to her ability to organize and maintain interest. When it was humanly possible, she was a gracious hostess among the young women's groups.

"Refinement, culture, poise and modesty were characteristics that we admired in Mrs. Powell.

"Mrs. Powell, to you we extend our highest tribute and adoration for your contribution to young people.

"Dr. Powell, we feel that you have lived a life triumphant over the many obstacles that have fallen in

your way. You have kept the faith when others were about to turn back.

"We pray that as you leave the active ministry you will find that tranquillity and solitude that are conducive to clear thinking, and that there shall flow from your pen thoughts which will be ideals for the youth of unborn generations. And may you rejoice to have been alive in such an age as ours.

"We are not showering you with roses because they soon wither and die; this evening we give no tangible gifts because they fade and lose their value, but in appreciation for what you have meant to the youth of the world, the youth of the nation, the youth of the state, city and community, and most especially to the youth of Abyssinia, we salute you!"

Mrs. Anna C. Perry, representing the women of the church, said:

"I am indeed honored and thrilled to be privileged to say a word to you relative to the respect and esteem in which the women of our church and community hold the noble character whom we are honoring tonight.

"We are living in a world of contradictions and inconsistencies; a world of progress and yet a world of uncertainties; a world of a continuous succession of changes. But through it all, it has been a consolation to know and to be associated with this man of vision, who has inspired us with new determination and courage to go forward in spite of handicaps.

"One of the most significant and hopeful facts of

the human race is this: that a Negro child of humble beginnings on a Virginian farm could, by virtue of his intrinsic worth, rise to a place among the stars of the first magnitude.

"Dr. Powell has proven that place of birth or inherited status are nothing to a great soul; and that no difficulties are too arduous for a man of real value.

"It has always been my contention that it is better to aim at something high even though you do not attain it than to aim at nothing and get just that. Aim is what spurs us on, keeps the fires within burning to a glow that baffles all discouragements.

"Twenty-nine years ago, when Dr. Powell became the pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church, he stepped into the arena endowed with certain qualities of heart and mind to face difficulties of which he never dreamed. At that time, Dr. Powell may or may not have been conscious of all his qualities; but he has the wit to know that his was the choice as to the use of his equipment and environment. No man ever tackled a job more bravely, toiled more patiently or achieved more gloriously; and thereby he proved that life could be a thing of pulsating and dynamic beauty.

"Tonight it is my peculiarly happy privilege to represent the women of our church and community at this Testimonial Reception, and we wish to say that hearing A. Clayton Powell, Sr., speak is like having the wisdom of the years brought within reach to be ours for the mere listening. He has taught us to know that it is better to follow even the shadow of the best

than to remain with the worst; that, in the words of Robert Louis Stevenson, 'to travel hopefully is better than to arrive,' and 'that he who would see and do wonderful things must often be ready to travel alone.'

"There have been times when he has been to us an oasis in the desert. His counsel has been widely sought by all classes, and his presence lends dignity to any gathering.

"His honesty of purpose and action has never been questioned, and his very nature rebels at pettiness.

"He has been so busy helping others that selfishness has found no place in his being.

"His host of admirers has rightly placed him on a pedestal, but he has kept his feet on the ground.

"Whenever and wherever things have gone wrong in our church, community, state or national life, this citizen of national repute has always been in the vanguard to help righten them.

"Under his leadership has come into being the greatest institution of its kind among our group in the known world; and women of every race and creed have been influenced for good because of his great work.

"We respect him for his great leadership. We revere him for his fine Christian character. We love him because he is a real man.

"What we have just said about Dr. Powell can in a large measure be said of Mrs. Powell, for behind every good man is a better woman.

"Mrs. Powell, for the women of our church and community, permit me to say that to us you have been

a mother, a sister, a counselor and a pal. You have been a pastor's wife in every sense of the word, and we want to assure you that you will always occupy a very warm place in our hearts.

"At the age of seventy-two this Moses relinquishes the responsibilities which he has shouldered for twenty-nine years and retires to the calmness of mature years to behold the fruit of his labors.

"We conclude that his has been a life replete with usefulness, and that he has accomplished with exacting beauty the task of his own choosing.

"Our prayer, our hope, and our fondest desire is that he might have a long life of rest and peace of body and mind, which he so richly deserves.

"Dr. Powell, we shall sorely miss your leadership, but in the missing I want to assure you that we have not lost you, for to the women of our great church and community, you will always be the symbol of the great institution for which you gave your all.

"In closing, allow me in behalf of the women of our church and community to say, as you leave the pastorate of this great organization, that we express certain wishes for you: the gift of that artistry of the mastery of Jesus in the commodity we call life; the ability to continue to get it across and lavish it on men and women who know not how to live the abundant life, the radiant life, the spiritual life. Also the continuation of that supreme poise, that certain proud indifference to adversity, and the strengthening of that gallant heart which concedes that no extremity in itself

is sufficient power to keep you from going on toward truth, which is God."

Dr. Charles H. Sears spoke of "A. Clayton Powell, the Man, Prophet, Priest."

"I am honored in having been asked to represent the New York clergy in this recognition and tribute to Dr. A. Clayton Powell upon the occasion of his retirement from the pastorate of the Abyssinian Baptist Church after twenty-nine years.

The Man

"As ministers we honor the man, A. Clayton Powell. The New York atmosphere is hard on a man. City climate is not congenial to character. Even rocks are subject to erosion. They are worn away by the winds that blow against them, by the rain that falls upon them, by the frost that feels out their fissures.

"A few years ago I had a startling earthquake experience in the very heart of the Seven Mile Gorge of Montana in the Rocky Mountains, when in a convulsion the earth shook itself and, lo, the impregnable mountains began to fall down about us. They had been subject to a process of erosion.

"So, too, I have seen men worn away by a kind of social erosion which has caused a gradual crumbling of character until finally, in a moral upheaval like the schismic convulsions that toppled the mountain peaks into the Seven Mile Gorge, men crash down at our feet. Not so this man. He has not permitted any social

erosion to wear down his moral character. He stands at the end of these years as impregnable as Gibraltar.

The Social Prophet

"Because in character he has been impregnable he has dared, during these thirty years, fearlessly to declare the counsels of God on great moral and social issues. But he has been more than a prophet; he has been a priest.

The Priest

"It has been given to him to declare the mysteries of God. He has been able to bring men, through Jesus Christ, into the very presence of God and to sustain them through their worship of Him."

Other Testimonials

"It is given to few men to enjoy so long and successful a pastorate, and to still fewer to retire from active service with such high honors and fervent prayers for peace and happiness in the days to come.

"Permit me to indulge the hope that your well-deserved respite may add years to your span of life, and that even in retirement the influence of your genial personality and the inspiration of your splendid achievements may continue to be felt not only in the Abyssinian Baptist Church, but throughout the country."

William P. Hayes, Pastor of
Bethany Baptist Church,
Newark, New Jersey

"Having known Dr. A. Clayton Powell for more than forty years in the service of the ministry, and having experienced a genuine fellowship and comradeship with him as a friend, it is with fervent praise that I give testimony of his achievements. Although Dr. Powell is retiring from active public life, his influence for the uplifting of humanity will ever live in the hearts of the many thousand whom he served. He is loved by all for his democratic counsel, kindness of heart, and gentleness of manner.

"It is my sincere hope that his retirement will be peaceful and his life long. Having wrought so well for the Master's cause, may his character and accomplishments serve as an inspiration to future generations for greater service to Our Master's cause and humanity."

George H. Sims, Pastor of Union Baptist Church and President, New York Colored Baptist State Convention

"We are happy to join with the members of Abyssinian Baptist Church in expressing to the Rev. Dr. and Mrs. A. Clayton Powell affectionate admiration and appreciation for and of their splendid services of more than a quarter century . . . in sound Christian and civic leadership . . . and further, to join with the prayers of the congregation for the maintenance of happiness and continued usefulness throughout the years to come."

Colonel and Mrs. Arthur Little

"We do not believe that anywhere there is a minister more devoted to the students' welfare than our beloved Dr. Powell. Our hearts blend in mutual gratitude when we recall one whose life stands out conspicuously as a guide to the young men and women of Abyssinian Baptist Church.

"We dedicate with the greatest esteem and admiration this testimonial to Dr. A. Clayton Powell."

The Pitman Shorthand Classes
Madeline West, Instructor

"It has been one of the greatest pleasures of my life to have fellowship with you throughout the years. The friendships I have made in Harlem have been very precious and none have meant more than with your dear people. You have accomplished so much in your life. You deserve your rest and leisure. May there be many more and happy years and may you be spared for a long time to us. You have the greatest church in New York City and perhaps throughout the world. It is easy to see what your life has accomplished."

Walter Main Howlett, Director
of Religious Education of Greater
New York Federation of Churches

"All you spoke of Dr. Powell as presiding officer of the memorable event was true categorically; I recall, neither from reading nor recollection, any person who has surpassed A. Clayton Powell, Sr., in achievement of his ideal and accomplishment of his objective. He

took Benjamin Kidd into the church without 'unchurching' himself. He stands upon the Mount of Transfiguration. May the heritage he thus passes on be carried on literally by his son and successor; this is my sincere and fervent prayer."

Rienzi B. Lemus, President
of Brotherhood of Dining Car
Employees, Washington, D. C.

"There is no pastor in New York City for whom I have greater respect than Dr. Powell. His work in organizing that great church is one of the outstanding creative Christian engineering work of this great city. There is no greater. Added to this is the fact that he has kept abreast of the times in his time and is willing for others to think differently than he does. There lives a noble pattern for Christian life."

Clarence V. Howell, Director
of Reconciliation Trips, Inc.

"We deeply regret that you have found it necessary to tender your resignation as pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church, which you have served untiringly for so many years.

"Although we will miss your pleasant smile and enthusiasm in the church work of the community, we feel that your son, Rev. A. Clayton Powell, Jr., is capable of carrying on the good work which you have started. Your life has been a great inspiration to the

religious work not only in the city but throughout the world."

Lieutenant Lewis Chisholm

"Your ministry has been one fraught with unprecedented successes, because of the unselfish sacrificial spirit which has characterized it. You have been a great source of inspiration to ministers everywhere, to religious workers, and to those who have entered into the more abundant life. Your influence for Kingdom interests has not been confined within the walls of Abyssinian, nor within the borders of the empire city of New York, nor within the boundaries of the states, but, starting at 'Jerusalem,' you have successfully disseminated and propagated the principles and ideals of the Man of Nazareth—and on into Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

"Your ministry has been a personal benediction to me."

J. Timothy Boddie, Pastor of
Union Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland

"I deem it an unspeakable honor to have been in close association with such a lovable, humble, sincere and true friend as you. Years will never erase the many helpful truths I have learned under your guidance, nor can I forget the hours of pleasant social contacts.

"I know that in your retirement you shall continue to hold the torch high and bring to Abyssinia, to the

race and even to the world, the benefits of your rich and fruitful experiences, for out of the depths of your soul shall flow the greatest of all your achievements—the living document of 'a man born of God.'"

Dorothy DenAcy Brooks
(Secretary to Dr. Powell for fourteen years)

"It has been a source of great inspiration and benefit to me personally to have known and worked with Dr. Powell. As a member for several years of the Board of Directors of the N. A. A. C. P., I have had opportunity to benefit through his wisdom and his experience. But above all has been the privilege of knowing so rare and fine a man."

Walter A. White, Secretary of the
National Association for the
Advancement of Colored People

"I want to take this opportunity to express my very great appreciation of the really marvelous contribution you have made to the moral, social and spiritual life of the City of New York. Wherever I have gone throughout the country and even in other countries, I have referred to the development of the institutional program of Abyssinian Church as possibly the best illustration of that kind of church work that is being promoted among colored people. Not only have you rendered invaluable service through the various departments of your church, but you have inspired younger

men in the ministry to go on to higher achievements after they have left your staff."

Channing H. Tobias,
Senior Secretary for Colored Work,
National Council of Y. M. C. A.
of U. S. A.

"The Baptist colored cause in Harlem has in the last few years made gratifying progress. At no time has the City Mission Society been so encouraged as at the present time. A large share of the credit for this is yours. Your great church has stood like the Empire Tower, a monument for all good work in Harlem.

"Upon the occasion of your retirement from the active leadership of the Abyssinian Baptist Church, the Board of Managers of the New York City Baptist Mission Society wish to extend to you its cordial felicitations and to express the earnest hope that long years of usefulness will be yours. Particularly do we hope that you will continue to encourage us and advise us in our work as a City Mission Society.

"In behalf of the Board and with high personal regards, believe me

Very sincerely,
Thomas J. Harris, M.D.
Corresponding Secretary."

An editorial in the New York *Amsterdam News*, entitled "Well Done. . . ." read:

"At long last, the Rev. A. Clayton Powell, Sr., is going to his Green Pastures. And he well deserves his respite from the hard labors he has performed as pastor of Abyssinian Baptist for three decades. When the board of trustees reluctantly accepted the resignation of the venerable minister of the gospel last Friday night, God in His kingdom must have remarked: 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.'

"But if any preacher ever loved his labors, spiritual and material, the Rev. Dr. Powell, Sr., did. Working like a beaver night and day, he was the guiding personality in the building of one of the world's greatest churches. Now it is the world's largest Protestant church, with some 14,000 active members, both black and white. Located in the heart of Harlem, Abyssinian has stood as a beacon of hope for distressed folk of all races, classes and creeds. The Rev. Dr. Powell, Sr., has labored well indeed in the vineyard of the Lord, and the fruits from his work are indelibly etched in the souls of thousands of people all over America.

"We sincerely hope that the great preacher will fully enjoy his Green Pastures on earth—whether they be reflections in his study, a walk in the country or a trip on the sea. Whatever they are he has earned them. We also pray that his successor will prove to be as worthy of his trust as the Rev. A. Clayton Powell, Sr."

An editorial by Nelson E. Dixon in the *Advance* was entitled "Our Pastor's Deep Humor." It follows:

"We believe that our pastor is able to express more real humor in his important messages than any other living pastor. And the beauty of his humor carries so much worth-while instruction.

"The following expressions of humor are taken from a recent lecture which he delivered before the faculty and student body of Colgate University.

"Test out your sense of humor and determine whether you are normal or abnormal in this respect.

'The audience faces a group of nine windows just back of the choir gallery. These windows contain the figures of saints and angels. We were confident that there would never be any angels in the audience, so we placed a few in the windows. These windows help to keep the eyes of the worshippers on the choir, even when the music is not inspiring.

'The pulpit is made of Italian marble and cost $6,000. This may seem an extravagance, but it has proven to be one of the finest psychological assets in our auditorium, for the marble platform helps to focus the attention on the preacher, when his sermon is very poor.

'The plates are passed twice at every Sunday service. These offerings are taken before the sermon. Colored people usually give in proportion as they are stirred by the sermon, therefore our offerings are never disturbed by dull sermons, for we get the money before we get the message.

'The next thing Abyssinian started out to do twenty years ago was to teach Negroes promptness, or

the value of being on time. To be late seems to be a constitutional weakness with the average Negro. I do not talk much about complexes for the simple reason I do not know much about them. But facts justify me in saying that if there is such a thing as a complex, the majority of Negroes have a tardiness complex.

'An old time preacher of our race was asked once, "What is procrastination?" He replied, "It is the chief doctrine of the Negro Baptist Church."

'This idea of tardiness is even expressed in Negro music. The white people wrote a hymn, "When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder, I'll Be There." The Negro knew he would not be on time so he wrote another hymn, "Don't Call the Roll Until I Get There."

'We began nearly a quarter of a century ago to remedy this trait, and I think we are succeeding. Every seat is taken fifteen minutes before time to open the services, and standing room is at a premium. Those who sing, "Don't Call the Roll Until I Get There," sing it out on the sidewalk.'

"These are a few expressions of humor coming from our pastor. If one reads them well he will find a wealth of material for serious thought.

"The deep humor of our pastor is responsible for his eternal youth. A smiling face and a wonderful source of humor will make anyone youthful as well as useful."

On December 4, 1937, the entire editorial page of the *National Baptist Voice* was dedicated by Editor Barbour to the life and work of the author of this

book. Half of the editorial is quoted here as a fitting climax to these estimations:

"Dr. A. Clayton Powell, Sr. is one of the greatest spiritual leaders of this generation. There can be no question about this assertion. He has done all a Christian minister can do.

"For twenty-nine years he has kept the light of God aglow in gay New York City. Originally an evangelist, he won men and women to Christ and his church. He cares not for honors, office and other appurtenances of public life. His glory was in the pastorate. He was correct in his assumption that the Baptist pastor has the highest office within the gift of the people.

"His ministry has not been a selfish one. On the occasion of his anniversary several years ago he pledged One Thousand Dollars a year to Virginia Union University. His contributions to missionary workers in Africa and all phases of Christian and social work reveal a generosity hardly to be matched in our generation.

"There are about one hundred and fifty thousand preachers of the Protestant faith in the United States. From casual observation these parsons seem as much alike as cherries picked from the same tree. They prate about a Carpenter who lived nineteen hundred years ago in Syria, and was put to death for his non-conformity; marry the love-lorn, pronounce funeral ora-

tions, butt into myriad affairs and wear white collars seven days in the week.

"Preachers are pretty much the same. Most of them are average men—faithful plodders, conformists, creatures of custom, hedged in by many a peccadillo, with here and there a virile personality, aggressive, fearless and unbroken by the dead, terrible hand of traditions.

"To the last named group belongs Adam Clayton Powell. He is the only liberal Negro Baptist minister we know over seventy years old. He is more than liberal; he is a radical. But he is incurably religious. The modernity of his preaching is startling. It is down to the minute, yet it is far from sheer sensationalism. It is practical, venturesome, and, in a very true sense, devotional.

"More than any other time during our long history we need some Baptist pastors to demonstrate the fact that it is possible to be a big man and enjoy life and work as a leader of a Baptist church.

"Many of us do not believe this. We are tearing up conventions, splitting associations and bringing disgrace upon the good name of our Christian institutions in our efforts to gain place and power.

"So Adam Clayton Powell comes to the end of his pastoral leadership in a blaze of glory. He will be remembered as a warm friend, a great pastor, a good citizen, a powerful preacher, a consummate organizer, and a champion of great principles.

"What an hour! It is too bad we will not be able to attend in conscious person our own funerals. If we

could we would hear beautiful resolutions, eulogies, music and praise in our honor. Our churches would be crowded, enemies would join the paean of praise.

"Dr. Powell is not dead. But he has lived to see what few ministers of his generation have seen. He has listened with his own ears and received with his own hands praise and gifts from loyal groups of friends at the end of his 'working day.'

"One of these days he will fall by the wayside under the weight of the years. The tribute paid to him then will not equal the one given him by the great Abyssinian Church during the month of November, 1937. And he heard it all!

"We take delight in dedicating this page to the life and work of Dr. Powell. And the fine thing about it is that he can read it now in this life."

EPILOGUE

WHEN Howard Hughes landed at Floyd Bennett Field, New York, from his record flight around the world, one of the first things he did was to praise his crew as being made up of "the ablest assistants a man could have." The plain implication is that his associates helped in a large way to make the dangerous adventure an unparalleled success. It is a long way from a one-room log cabin and a brush arbor church in Franklin County, Virginia, to one of the finest apartments in Harlem, the most beautiful marble pulpit in America and the largest Protestant church in the world. No man could have traveled this distance in a lifetime without being surrounded by the "most able assistants."

It is impossible for the readers to know the secret of my partial success until they have known the character and ability of my assistants, for without them the writing of this book would have been impossible.

It is giving credit to whom credit belongs to place the name of Mrs. Mattie Fletcher Powell at the head of this list. She was a pastor's wife to the manner born. She did not live under or above the people, but with them. The people did not have to look down or look

up to see her, for she was always at their side sharing their joys and sorrows. When I wanted to know what the church members were thinking, I talked with Mrs. Powell, for they confided in her as a mother, sister and friend. She deserves all the honors the churches have bestowed upon her and all the compliments paid her in this book.

I would name as my second assistant the official staff of the church. In the official staff I include not only the deacons, trustees, clerks and stenographers, but the heads of all the departments, leaders of all clubs and auxiliaries. I have never tried to "run a church." Any pastor who tries to do this injures himself and disrupts his church. Jethro told Moses this in the eighteenth chapter of Exodus. He advised Moses to organize the people into groups and appoint a leader for each group and for him to lead the leaders. I tested the wisdom of this method of leadership in three churches and it never failed. A wise pastor will never interfere with the members of any organization in his church as long as he can control the head of that organization.

The choir is called the "war department of the church." If this is true, it is because the pastor tries to be chorister. During my twenty-nine years at Abyssinia Church I did not have a moment's trouble with the choir. I never at any time meddled with its internal machinery, but at all times I kept in closest touch with the chorister, Mr. J. H. Page, who was not only one

of my most able assistants but one of my very intimate friends.

In the fourth chapter of this book will be found an acknowledgment of the great influence of the press. It should be said here, however, that it is impossible to exaggerate the assistance of the press during my long ministry. While many of the preachers were trying to destroy me, the papers were singing my praise. In nearly every chapter of this book will be found a tribute to the helpfulness of the press, either expressed or implied.

I have already mentioned in a commendatory way the names of Revs. Marshall L. Shepard, W. Willard Monroe, Horatio S. Hill and A. Clayton Powell, Jr., who were my assistants on the payroll of the Abyssinian Church. The names of Revs. Arthur J. Payne, C. A. Chick and James Vance McIver will complete the list of this splendid group of assistants.

Rev. Mr. Payne became my assistant in June, 1920, and served until April, 1923. His coming was most timely. He not only rendered valuable service as an evangelist during the tent meetings, but assumed most of the pastoral work, leaving me free to devote my energies to the financing of the building of the church edifice and community house. As pastor of the Enon Baptist Church from 1923 until now, he has been a potent influence in Baltimore and the State of Maryland. He is a vice-president of the National Baptist Convention and was president of the Baptist State Convention of Maryland for six years.

Rev. Mr. Chick was with us for two years while he was working for his Master's degree at Columbia University. He was a fine yokefellow, a good preacher and a better teacher. Mr. Chick is now Professor of History and Economics at Virginia Union University.

Rev. Mr. McIver was assistant pastor one year longer than any other assistant, and no one wanted him to leave when he was called to the Union Baptist Church in Orange, New Jersey, in January, 1938. For poise, geniality, preaching ability and devotion to church work his equal is hard to find. I did not hear four complaints about his work, which was arduous indeed, during the four years he was with us. His fine personality in the room of the sick and sorrowing radiates health, sunshine and happiness. A half hour's talk with Mr. McIver always puts one's soul in tune with the Infinite, not because of what he says, but because of what he is.

If there are any other reasons for my attainments other than the ones just mentioned I would say they are these:

First, for fifty years my average reading time was four hours a day.

Second, I never permitted the weeds of hatred, prejudice, intolerance and ingratitude to grow in my heart. I have had two favorite sayings through life—

(a) The one who loves is always superior to the one who hates.

(b) I would rather have one tuberose pinned on the

lapel of my coat while I was alive than to have carloads of flowers piled on my coffin when I was dead.

I have had more than my share of roses, and I believe it is because I have never missed an opportunity of pinning one on a fellow traveler even when I felt he did not deserve it.

Third, I have tried to maintain a keen sense of humor. Mr. Nelson E. Dixon, who perhaps knows me better than any living layman, implies in an editorial published in the eleventh chapter of this book that nature has generously endowed me with the saving grace of humor and that this is the secret of my "eternal youth and usefulness."

Fourth, I have never permitted anything to swerve me from the ministry. Three opportunities for making large sums of money were offered me, one being that of succeeding the late Richard B. Harrison in the role of "De Lawd" in *The Green Pastures*. All of these offers were made because of my reputation as a churchman and as a gospel preacher. According to my philosophy the selling of that reputation would have meant the prostitution of a sacred calling. No course but the one I followed could have brought me into such a pleasant and peaceful harbor.

As I write the last words of this book, what is my feeling? I ought to have some feeling in the matter. I do have and it is this: life has been very kind to me. I have heard many wise people nearing the sunset of life make this foolish statement, "If I had my life

to live over, I would do thus and so." In the foolish language of these wise people, if I had my life to live over, I would do with few exceptions what I did do.

If I had the privilege of selecting from all recorded history seventy-three years in which to live, I would choose the seventy-three years in which I have lived. More mental and material progress has been made during those years than in all the years of the world's written history.

If I had the privilege of selecting the race into which I wanted to be born and to work, I would select the race in which I was born and in which I have lived and worked, for this race needs me more than any other race. I would not object in the least to being born again in Franklin County, Virginia—along with Booker T. Washington, Byrd Prillerman and W. W. Brown.

If I had the privilege of selecting a career, I would select again the Jesus Way of living and the Jesus Way of working. I would like to be pastor again of the Ebenezer Church in Philadelphia, the Immanuel Church in New Haven and the Abyssinian Church in New York.

Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries
1 1012 01384 3216

DATE DUE

MAR 20

JUN 29 2018
MAR 17 2019

THE LIBRARY STORE #47-0207